Discussions in Existential-Phenomenological Dreamwork using a Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology.

Degree of Doctor of Existential Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy (DCPsych)

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Abstract

This research uses Constructivist Grounded Theory to explore how practitioners with extensive years of experience in the existential-phenomenological field of therapy work with dreams. In-depth interviews were carried out twice with participants, with the second interview using a paper written about the first interviews as a stimulus. Through Constructivist Grounded Theory, categories from the participant narratives were elicited through the process of coding. Five theoretical categories were elicited from the data: the becoming of the existential counselling psychologists and psychotherapists, the phenomenological inquiry of dreams, relational dreamwork, the politics in dreamwork and metaphor in dreamwork. The discussion brings out complexities and dynamic aspects of multiple becoming(s) in practitioners, the political aspect of therapy and the use of metaphor in existential-phenomenological dreamwork. Implications of the results and discussion to the profession of counselling psychology and suggestions for future research are presented in conclusion to the findings.

Key Words

Existential-phenomenological practitioners; dreamwork; constructivist grounded theory, becoming, relational.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On the subject of Dreams.

> *"Having on one occasion, now to be mentioned, a more than usual number of engagements, I was obliged to remain overnight, and a bed was procured for me at the residence of a cheesemonger in the same locality. The house was very old, the rooms very low, and the street very narrow. At night jaded with my professional labours, I went to my dormitory, which seemed filled with a strong cheesy atmosphere, which affected my stomach greatly, and quite disturbed the biliary secretions. I tried to produce a more agreeable atmosphere to my olfactory sense by smoking cigars but did not succeed. At length, worn out by fatigue, I tried to sleep, and should have succeeded, but for a time another source of annoyance prevented my doing so; for in an old wall behind my head, against which my ancient bedstead stood, there were numerous rats gnawing away in real earnest. I was still breathing the cheesy atmosphere; and this associated with the marauding rats, so powerfully affected my imagination, that a most horrid dream was the consequence. I fancied myself in some barbarous country, where, being charged with a political offence, I was doomed to be incarcerated in a large cheese. And although this curious prison-house seemed most oppressive, it formed but part of my sufferings: for scarcely had I become reconciled with my miserable fate, then, to my horror, an army of rats attacked the monster cheese, and soon they seemed to have affected an entrance and began to fix themselves in numbers upon my naked body (Seafield, 1865, p.3)."*

This dream has been cited from the collected works of Frank Seafield (1865), who gathered a series of speculations concerning the mystery of dreams and visions. He mentions the dreams of a medical doctor by the name of Dr Hobbes, who used to keep note of the dreams he used to have when sleeping over in his patients' homes. The story narrated by this doctor during one of his patient visits encompasses what this thesis aims to address. In this dream, Dr Hobbes not only gives a detailed description of what was going on in his waking hours before he had the dream, but he continues to process these deliberations in his sleep. Having left the matter about the smell of cheese and the terrifying sound of rats

somewhat unresolved, he engages with this phenomenon in his sleep. Dr Hobbes concludes that the odour and the gnawing had such a presence in his present circumstance that it affected his sleep, suggesting a direct relationship between his waking and sleeping hours. 'All the auxiliaries were present to the waking thoughts of the dream,' holds Dr Hobbes (in Seafield, 1865, p.5). In his interpretation of his dream, Dr Hobbes attributes having this dream due to unresolved matters already present in his waking life. He was presented with a new phenomenon, sleeping in a bedroom with a strong smell of cheese, attracting all the rats in the vicinity. This created such discomfort to his lifeworld that he tried to replace the smell with that emanating from his cigars. He does not give a psychoanalytic interpretation of his dream as he does not attribute it to repressed sexual desires or other unconscious representations of unresolved matters. Instead, Dr Hobbes gives what looks like an existential-phenomenological interpretation of his dream. He suggests that the discomfort he was experiencing with his lodging in his waking hours remained an issue even during his sleeping hours. Dr Hobbes, therefore, engages with the presenting content as it occurs in the dream and attempts to make meaning of his dream by bridging his experiences in both the waking and the sleeping hours. The three elements which are present in this thesis concern the act of dreaming. In the first element, there is an openness to allow the dream to happen and eventually remembering it and engaging with it in the waking hours. The existential-phenomenological work that takes place with dreams is the second element that involves describing the dream in detail, treating the dream as what it is without any hidden or latent meaning, suggesting an interplay between the dreaming and the waking hours. The third element indicates that to work with clients' dreams, the practitioners need to work on their own dreams in different ways in the process of defining existential-phenomenological dreamwork.

My encounters with Jungian theory were the first primary motivation that intrigued me to delve into the world of dreams. The dreamworld is indeed one of the spaces where one can navigate the depths of one's inner being. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that I grew up surrounded by the gods of the Neolithic temples around Malta, where daily sacrificial offerings from the hunting and farming expeditions of the first settlers on the Maltese islands were offered to the Great Mother (Gimbutas, 1999). When I started my Jungian Sandplay process, I delved deeper into the significance of symbolic material. I learnt to appreciate the richness of our underground temple, the Hypogeum, where priests used sleep-inducing drugs with people who visited the temples. Carrying the votive (Trump, 2002) of the sleeping lady in their hands, they were hypnotised, hopeful for a miracle that would occur during their sleep. It was believed that the long-desired healing would appear in their sleep and eventually wake up, cured the following morning. I was so intrigued with the revelations in my dreams that I have not ceased to look for ways of working through them. I explored my dreams with my existential-phenomenological therapist, in image form with my Jungian Sandplay therapist and more recently with my Jungian analyst in my post-doctorate training at the Jung Institute in Zurich.

Gaining a scholarship from the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme made it possible to invest in a Doctorate programme where I commuted between Malta and London for the best six years of my life. Commuting so often made it possible to work on my doctoral programme and the Sandplay process for a little longer. Exposing myself to both the existential and Jungian ways of working with dreams clarified what I wanted to do in this thesis, as indicated in the research question below.

1.2 The development of the research question.

My research question is,

'How do existential-phenomenological therapists work with dreams?'

The experience of delving deeply into existential philosophy and the more contemporary therapeutic practices was my motivation to delve deeper into the topic of dreams. I had assumed there was nothing else beyond Freud and Jung. Research in existential-phenomenological dreamwork has focused on the use of tripartite questioning (where, what and how of the dream) by the therapist in response to the client's dream (Young, 1993). The four existential worlds comprising the physical, personal, social and spiritual world are a systematic exploration implemented by the therapist to assist the client in making meaning of the dream (Deurzen and Adams, 2011). Spinelli (2015) writes about acting out parts of the dream, a strategy involving bodily experiences, suggesting the relational aspect of the client to the dream itself. Furthermore, the relational aspect between the therapist and the client when telling the dream becomes a meaningful connection the more the therapy progresses to the deeper layers. This study aims to explore whether other ways of working with dreams phenomenologically have been developed by the research participants.

It was indeed a moment in my second year, during the psychoanalytic module in my doctoral programme, that the idea of exploring existential-phenomenological dreamwork as my main research project came to mind. After a day dedicated to dreamwork, I found myself eager to learn more. When submitting my research proposal, I was informed that a dissertation on existential-phenomenological dreamwork was long overdue. Indeed, when visiting Regent's University to look at dissertations that were written on the topic in question, I found that they were no longer available. The hard copies of the Masters'

dissertations completed before 2006 were disposed of to make space for more recent work. Soft copies were not available. I only managed to get access to one of the dissertations through one of my research participants. This dissertation focused mainly on how clients perceive their dreaming and waking lives as interwoven, where "the themes of temporality, space, relation to self and others appeared, providing a base for more exploration of the dreamer's worldview" (King, 2006, p.79). During an extensive search of online doctoral theses, I did come across one such thesis on the British Library e-thesis online services. Smith's (2013) study focused on therapists' experience of working with existential-phenomenological dreamwork. This research will be explained in more detail in the literature review (Chapter 2).

My third motivation is that I'm also an active dreamer. It was when I was engaging with my dreams with both an existential psychotherapist and then when I moved on to explore my dreams with a Jungian Analyst. I was playful around the idea of taking the same dream to both therapists, creating every opportunity of revisiting the same dream from a different orientation. I kept notebooks of dreams, which I kept next to my bedside table, careful not to wake up suddenly or spring out of bed too quickly lest I lose them for my worldly chores. At times, the interpretation of an old dream was revealing; at other times, it felt like a déjà vu whilst it provided many different facets that could be explored further at some point in time. Rather than feeling confused, I developed the ability to engage with my dreams with feeling and my thinking. I learnt how to appreciate the immensity and richness in the depth of the work and recognised the potential for a life truly worth living, which was being revealed in my dreams. Moreover, I wondered what I could contribute to counselling psychology in the practice of working with dreams from an existential-phenomenological modality.

1.3 Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT)– dealing with the mess of the method.

The following is just an overview to position an argument around the use of CGT in this dissertation, and it will be developed further in the methodology (Chapter 3). Initially, I debated whether to do Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) or CGT. Being already knowledgeable about the use of IPA from my undergraduate studies in psychology, I was aware that I would gain convergent and divergent descriptions of experiences with IPA, examining the lived experience of a small number of participants in detail. The aim would be to look in detail at the participants' ways of working with dreams, giving a detailed interpretation in understanding the experience. However, when I gained more familiarity with the CGT method, I discovered that it would be possible to interweave my knowledge with the knowledge of other existential practitioners and be able to present a valuable and informative discussion on dreamwork to non-existential practitioners in the field of counselling psychology. I also felt that this methodology was the more appropriate to answer my research question since I found a discrepancy in the knowledge related to this phenomenon. Moreover, the theory around the development of the specific subject of existential-phenomenological dreamwork was sporadic and loose, with barely any cross-referencing among the more contemporary writers of one another's work.

As I have already reiterated earlier, creating a theory used by a larger population of practitioners was an ongoing challenge. Nagel, Burns, Tilley and Aubin (2015) hold that all CGT researchers in their right described the difficulties they encountered with the method because of a lack of knowledge and inexperience. Nagel et al. (2015) recommend that novice researchers provide resources to their supervisor team and craft a strong rationale in favour of the methods of choice. Staller (2012) states, "If those doing the assessing do not share your epistemological orientation, you may face the added burdens of needing to

educate others about epistemological difference" (p.18). Mercieca (2011) stated that what she found helpful during her PhD process was never to stop writing. She wrote about her thoughts and feelings, her confusions and her uncertainty. More importantly, the researcher wants to have a thesis that is a publishable academic piece of work.

According to Staller (2012), CGT is about unmasking a reality that is already present where a relationship develops between what the researcher can know and how it becomes known. This methodology favours a critical realist ontological perspective. The researcher maintains a realistic critique by understanding what there is rather than merely describing it. CGT also aims to differentiate the ontological view of what is fundamental to epistemology. Therefore, what the researcher knows is put under scrutiny when the participants present new information. The process of coding this information aims to assist the researcher in organising the latest knowledge and find ways to make it known to others.

Nagel et al. (2015) found that many of the methods, procedures and processes associated with CGT "have not been well explicated, nor are the philosophical underpinnings of constructivism and symbolic interactionism well-articulated in published research reports and articles" (p. 376). Consulting directly with Professor Bryant (2017), who co-authored the more recent CGT methodology book with Professor Charmaz (Bryant and Charmaz, 2019), was highly beneficial, particularly in how the methodology is implemented and the results are tabulated.

Law (2004) holds that standard research methods are never straightforward, and the researcher would need to deal with the mess of piles of data, ambivalences, lack of clarity, unanswered research questions. Knowledge is constantly reconstructed and unpacked by the researcher's Being. Indeed, as Law (2004) rightly argues, even though people and things

are always on the move, there is the assumption that the method is simply passed down through centuries and used "as a fairly specific, determinate, and more or less identifiable processes" (p.5). This takes for granted that the mess will be resolved with a prescribed set of rules and procedures, but Law (2004) reiterates that knowledge is embedded in a language of uncertainty. The researcher never knows enough and continues to search for new knowledge in the process of becoming.

Garreau and Bandiera de Mello (2009) hold that the concept of creativity is not addressed in the grounded theories. However, the idea of how creative researchers can become theoretically sensitive has been present in the pioneers' work on CGT, such as Charmaz (2014) and Bryant and Charmaz (2019). Therefore, whilst theoretical sensitivity can be acquired through distilling the mess, certainty can never be achieved as scientific matters are not infallible (Reichertz, 2019). Another reason why scientific certainty is not possible is that in the subject of dreams, there is no technicality in the manner of how the dream experience is shared between the therapist and the client.

1.4 Overview of the chapters.

In this introductory chapter, the constituting elements of this thesis are outlined. For the reader's ease, there is some parallel use of the pronouns 'he' and 'she'. Plural pronouns are used more often. There is also the use of the first person singular when referring to the researcher. The psychologist and the psychotherapist will be referred to as the 'practitioner' in the field of counselling psychology.

Chapter 2 brings together an overview of the fundamental and more contemporary moving forces that have contributed to dreamwork. Towards the end of the 19th century up until the middle of the 20th century, dreams became a topic of analytical interpretation regarding their phenomenological content, their relation to human emotions and the unconscious (Freud, 1954; Jung, 1974). The psychoanalytic era of dreams was regarded as a phase of meaningful reflections with a view that the interpretations were typical of a population of people with similar repressed experiences (Freud, 1954).

Jungian theory encouraged revisiting the collective conscious/unconscious influences, giving importance to cultural historicity despite not necessarily forming part of the individual's present culture (Jung, 1974). Dreams also became a topic of inquiry in the history of phenomenology, as seen in the description of the phenomenon in Dr Hobbes' dream interpretation. Psychiatrists took up the phenomenological aspects of dreamwork when working with mental illness in hospitals (Boss, 1963; Binswanger, 1993). More contemporary phenomenologists strove to move away from psychoanalysis by introducing an existential-phenomenological way of working with dreams (Van Deurzen and Adams, 2011; Spinelli, 2015). The advancements in the neuroscientific research of sleep and dreams have created a balance between dreamwork's psychological and philosophical underpinnings. Scientific results also undermined the postulations of classical Freudian psychoanalysis (Kaku, 2014; Walker, 2017). There is also neurological evidence that informs us how the brain is regulating sleep and how other aspects of sleep, such as dreams, are controlled (Leschziner, 2019). Such scientific advancements can no longer be ignored but rather should be a source of information for the practitioners who work with dreams and other fantasies.

Chapter 3 presents the necessary prerequisites of the methodology of choice. The researcher's epistemological and ontological positions are clearly described, together with a

reflexive presentation of what informed the researcher's choice of research method. It also addresses the ethical considerations around the choice of research questions, follow-up cycles of iterative description, and a demographic understanding around the choice of participants.

Chapter 4 gives an analytical construction of the five theoretical codes that were construed from the emergent, focused and theoretical coding procedures as is pertinent to CGT: the becoming of the existential counselling psychologists and psychotherapists, the phenomenological inquiry of dreams, relational dreamwork, the politics in dreamwork and metaphor in dreamwork.

Chapter 5 The discussion brings out complexities and dynamic aspects of multiple becoming(s) in practitioners, the political aspect of therapy and the use of metaphor in existential-phenomenological dreamwork.

Chapter 6 draws together the arguments and suggests how existential-phenomenological dreamwork can be applied in the formation of the helping professionals with particular attention to counselling psychology.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2. Introduction

This literature review is written in narrative style (Ferrari, 2015). It is intended to focus on areas of particular interest that were addressed in depth in the process of doing the research. Green, Johnson and Adams (2006), describe the narrative literature review as the process whereby the author summarises the findings in a condensed format, organising the information in a manner that puts the aims of research into perspective. Despite having identified a detailed explication of the history of dreams starting from Seafield's (1865) volumes of collated recounts of anthropologists, medical doctors and priests who travelled to different populations around the world observing, recording and intervening on dream-related behaviours and Rivers' (1918) and Lincoln's (1935) studies on the importance of dreams in primitive tribes, it was not possible to include all this information due to word limit restrictions.

In my search for literature on the subject of dream interpretation, I also read articles on the healing traditions of the symbols in dreams of the early Egyptian civilizations (Ausman, 2003). In the Greek and Roman traditions (Barbera, 2008), sleep was induced, enabling people to have prophetic dreams, whereby gods communicated their wishes to mortal men. Plato (1997) believed that vision is the product of a non-burning light that is emitted from the eyes onto an external object. This light is internalised in the soul equalising the inward movements between sleeping and dreaming. Plato also wrote about the psychological component of repressed or forbidden desires appearing in dreams (Barbera, 2007) preceding Freud's ideology around repressed sexual desires (see 2.1). Aristotle (2018) refers

to most dreams as happenstance and just as in waking “mentioning somebody is neither an indication nor a cause for that person showing up, so also the dream is neither an indication nor a cause of its coming to pass” (p.123). He also uses the same dichotomy to describe the difference between pleasant dreams where the dreamer is untroubled by lawless desires, and bad dreams where the rational part is asleep, allowing the evil elements to take control, thus repudiating the idea that dreams come from God and God alone (Gallop, 1990). The Roman philosophers such as Cicero and Marobius were the first to consider the connection between waking and sleeping hours (Barbera, 2007).

The claim that dreamwork belongs to the philosophical tradition continues with Descartes (1641) who made no distinction between the mind and soul. Descartes (1641) states that “the body may easily perish, but the mind or soul (I make no distinction between them) is owing to its nature immortal” (p.5). He also makes no distinction between the thinking processes that go on between waking and sleeping hours based on the premise that everything which is perceived is true. “Whether I am waking or sleeping, two plus three equals five, a square has no more than four sides; nor does it seem possible that such obvious truths could be affected by any suspicion that they are false” (Descartes, 2008, p.15). Descartes (2008) spoke about the continuity of thinking in sleep with no novelties featuring in the manifestation of dreams. Du Plock (1996) holds that practitioners in existential psychotherapy are mindful of the grounding in the philosophical tradition. It comes as no surprise that it has had its influence on dreamwork. Following this summary of archaic and philosophical traditions in dreamwork, I will continue reviewing the prominence of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of dreams. The collection of artefacts found in Freud’s house in London only confirms how Freud’s theory on dreamwork sits on the shoulders of these giants. After a brief mention of Jung’s theory on dreams, I will narrow it

down to the literature to the most influential European and British practitioners. The American existential-phenomenological therapists acknowledge Boss' influence on their therapeutic work and continue adding variety to the field in the manner they encourage their clients to give importance to the dream dimension. The study of brain activity in dreams has taken more prominence in the field, and the evidence gathered comes across as a threat to the more traditional understandings of what goes on in the sleeping hours and how all this activity is related to the waking hours. Finally, a brief description of other co-existing styles of working which are non-existential, less phenomenological but more interpretative-oriented is also presented in this review, as their influence in the field of dreamwork just cannot be disregarded.

2.1 Psychoanalytic Dreamwork.

On reading the original works of Freud's (1954) *Interpretation of Dreams,* what was immediately striking were his debates around already existing theories on dreams. In the process of discussing the work of his predecessors, Freud (1954) describes his approach as being more phenomenological. The dream is described as a psychical structure that carries meaning, assigning these new meanings to the waking life at a specific point in the person's life. He also supports the idea that the body is a receptor for stimuli coming from the outside world, stimuli of which the body knows nothing of when awake. For instance, "the beginning of illness might make themselves felt in dreams before anything could be noticed of it in waking life, owing to the magnifying effect produced upon impressions by dreams" (1954, p.33). With a similar argument, the sexual content of the dreams is also drawn from the client's own phenomenological experience. A distinction was made between the latent and manifest content of a dream where everything is something else, not what it is. The

psychoanalytic interpretative notion also embraced the “revival of dream-interpretation using symbolism” (Freud, 1954, p. 226), described as manifestations of fragments of trivial experiences displaced or condensed in dream content. In his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (2015) Freud further elaborates on the rebellious tendencies of the sexual instincts if an individual is over-investing in achievements, the ends of which are socially higher but not sexually stable. While Freud (2015) prides himself on supporting the idea that psychoanalysis is one of the few therapies in those days, which focused on the mundane, the everyday trivialities in the individual’s phenomenal world. Siegelman (1990) believes that Freud pathologises the unconscious unduly and carries out his work on dreamwork with a biased judgment and makes a good attempt at handling the dream in the waking with uncertainty, mystery and doubt without reaching for fact or interpretation. Du Plock (1996) also seems to have the view that while Freud makes good use of the symbols in classical mythology and literature to support his hypotheses, some critics believe he only managed to attain a status of literature, despite his clear intention to develop a form of therapy. Despite this criticism, Freud’s book ‘Interpretation of Dreams’, “continues to be taken uncritically by scholars” (Shamdasani, 2003, p.103).

2.2 Jungian Analysis of Dreams.

By 1906 Freud was not only internationally recognised and acclaimed in academic psychiatry, but he was much revered by the younger generation, one of whom was Carl Gustav Jung who at the time was a Senior Physician at the *Burghölzli* Clinic in Zurich (Fichtner, 2003). Jung had just published his first volume on ‘Diagnostischen Assoziationsstudien’ (Diagnostic Association Studies) which sparked off an intense

correspondence with Freud for many years. Eventually, there came a time when Jung and Freud had to go their separate ways as there was a considerable disagreement not only in their therapeutic approach with their patients but also in the way they engaged with their dreams. Jung (1974) claims that his approach is not only phenomenological, but dreams are the guiding words of the soul. Jung (1974) argued that the therapist has much to learn and *"*it goes without saying that she should give up all the theoretical assumptions and should in every single case be ready to construct a new theory of dreams" (Jung, 1974, p.95). Indeed, Jung (1974) stated that people spend half of their lives in an unconscious state. However, unlike Freud, Jung (1974) was of the view that the theory that dreams only represent repressed wishes was out of date, a doctrine that only narrowed the meaning of a dream. Instead, he believed that to understand the client's description truly, the therapist would need to stick as close as possible to the image as described by the client. Despite the efforts of staying with the phenomenon that the client brings, Jung's approach still gave importance to interpretation, with the possibility of having more than one interpretation, carrying enigmatic messages from existing complexes in the psyche. The term compensation replaced latent and manifest content, a strategy that was not considered an illusory of wish fulfilment. Rather, Jung ascribes "the compensatory role to dreams in so far as they preserve sleep" (p.39). Similarly, to Freud, Jung (1974) believed that the everyday mundane experience of the client might be so disturbing and painful that the dream takes on a "sleep-preserving, affect-disguising function" (p.40). As to the use of archetypal symbols, otherwise referred "to as expressions of content not consciously recognised" (p.104), Jung (1974) discouraged fixed preconceived opinions of the symbol, since the idea of working with symbols in dreams is to discover what things mean to the client in real life.

Von Franz (1991) was the closest colleague of Jung who published numerous works about the interpretation of fairy tales and dreams. She argues that dreams remain an unexplained life phenomenon that is deeply interrelated to the physiological processes of life. Once the client begins to understand the dreams; the client begins to see the light. Von Franz (1991) liked using the eye motif, the inner eye, as an image to the analogy of light because when a person "closes his physical eyes in sleep, his soul sees the truth in a dream." (p.7). This, in turn, will assist the development of the client's self-knowledge in the process of recognising who one is. Moreover, Von Franz (1991) also believed that the culture is doomed to extinction if basic religious ideas of that same culture are no longer creatively effective in the soul through dreams, as already mentioned earlier in the primitive era of civilisation. The use of dreams in psychotherapy, particularly in western societies, has been primarily dominated by interpretative practices derived mainly from Freudian and Jungian dream theories (Shamdasani, 2003). It is argued that while Freud "discovered that dreams had a meaning, it was Jung who discovered what their meaning really was" (Shamdasani, 2003, p.102).

2.3 The Relevance of Existential-Phenomenological Theory to Dreamwork.

The task of bringing together a sequence of historical events concerning existential-phenomenological theory was not a difficult one but understanding the relevance or making linkages between existential-phenomenological theory and dreamwork was daunting. Writings and archived correspondences about the historical initiation of existential-phenomenological theory in Europe are collated by veterans in the field as in the case of the United Kingdom (Du Plock 1996, Van Deurzen, 2017; Van Deurzen et al, 2019). However,

when it came to the subject of dreamwork, records of events were either scarce or for the most part non-sequential, making sources very inaccessible. Therefore, to give a sound representation of the history of events that preceded the ideologies around existential-phenomenological dreamwork, I resorted to email correspondences with scholars, historians and practitioners who are well immersed in the existential-phenomenological field and who were either witnesses to these recited events or have access to the remotely-published material. Multimedia material references to specific historical events were also taken into consideration. Unlike Du Plock (1996), Van Deurzen (2005), Van Deurzen and Arnold-Baker (2018) and Van Deurzen et al. (2019) who wrote about the history of philosophy and phenomenology (Du Plock 1996), providing a comprehensive perspective of western existential and philosophical thinking and unlike Correia, Cooper and Berdondini (2014, 2016) who give a very extensive statistical description of how existential therapy is growing worldwide, I try to focus on the historical events that somehow informed the development of existential-phenomenological dreamwork.

2.3.1 European History - The Phenomenological Movement.

Van Deurzen et al. (2019) state that at the turn of the twentieth century, “a number of European psychiatrists became restless and disenchanted with the positivistic, natural scientific approaches of the day and turned to philosophy to overcome their limitations” (p.8). Jaspers (1968) was a German psychiatrist who became impatient at the speculative stance of analytical psychology and was among the first to challenge these interpretative views. Rather, Jaspers believed that psychopathology needed to be rebuilt on a phenomenological foundation (Spiegelberg, 1972). Jaspers (1968) proposed that beginning

from the patient's experience in the here and now and anything else which is outside the patient's consciousness also remains outside of the therapist's consideration. He argued that as therapeutic practitioners we "go through a stage where we form our ideas in one way or another of psychic events, and only later acquire an unprejudiced grasp of these events as they are. And so, this phenomenological attitude is to be acquired only by an ever-repeated effort and by an ever-renewed overcoming of prejudice" (p.1316).

However, Foucault (1993) argued that the field of psychopathology for Jaspers remained divided categorising patients into three groups. The first group presented patients with a fully intelligible phenomenon, generally referring to life experiences. The second group included patients with causally explainable phenomena; understood as exaggerations or hallucinations and experienced as psychosis. The therapist, in this case, was limited in arriving at any conclusive answers. (Jaspers, 1968). The third group of patients are described as unintelligible, where the therapist would only be able to work using metaphor and analogy (Jaspers, 1968). Foucault (1993) holds that the analysis of dreams brings to light the fundamental meanings of existence, where no group categories exist, eradicating the split between the intelligible and unintelligible. The dream, according to Foucault (1993), is still situated in the world of existence. "Dreams are to be found in the first movements of freedom and its original directness. If dreams are so weighty for determining existential meanings, it is because they trace in their fundamental coordinates, the trajectory of existence itself" (p.60).

With time, the movement also attracted the attention of psychiatrists from the Netherlands such as Berg (1972) who describes four forms of experiences in the physical world, one's body, one's social world, and time perspective of past and future, resonating with

Baumeister's (1991) levels of meaning and Van Deurzen's (2010) four existential dimensions. Most of the practitioners who joined the movement were either Freudian or Jungian analysts, very experienced practitioners who were disquieted by the thought of not knowing what was happening with the patient's existence. Notably, one of the practitioners who joined this movement was Medard Boss. Boss had already been influenced by Binswanger's phenomenological vision of psychiatry. However, while Binswanger (Van Deurzen et al., 2019) focused on developing a research method that is not contaminated by the personal prejudices of the researcher, Boss viewed Daseinsanalysis as a method to therapeutic practice. However, when he made personal acquaintance with Heidegger and read his work, he renounced his "psychoanalytically informed theory of illness and placed himself wholly in the service of Daseinanalysis" (Condrau, 1991, p.60). The correspondence between Heidegger and Boss lasted for many years. As a result, the Zollikon seminars took place where Heidegger taught Boss' medical students, the need to challenge Cartesian thinking "which was responsible for the modern devaluation of all phenomena" (Van Deurzen et al., 2019, p.59).

Boss (1963) described a series of misconceptions that needed to be avoided when working phenomenologically with a patient. The first misconception is an allegorical one where Boss (1963) argues that "poetry is unreal if it is not related to concrete, specific patterns of human behaviour" (p.50). Boss (1963) emphasised an open approach where the use of metaphor can facilitate the description of a person's lifeworld. This misconception was also challenged by R.D. Laing where poetry, laughter, playing games, and music were considered important to psychotherapy as they connected the therapist's insight to the patient's lived experience (Heaton, n.d.). A second misconception concerns the patient's description of an idealistic world viewed as a separate entity from his/her dilemmas. Boss (1963) argued that

what appears in the patient's foreground is clarified through iterated meaning-making, which also includes patients' idealistic worlds. A platonic view of one's lifeworld is the third misconception, as described by Boss (1963). He refutes the idea that ontic and ontological structures require different solutions. He viewed both Freud's and Heidegger's theories as phenomenological but fundamentally ontological. Finally, Boss (1963) supports the notion that people do not exist in a vacuum and it is not only the gap between subject and object that needs to be bridged but also the individual and his/her surrounding world.

2.4 Existential-Phenomenological Dreamwork.

The year 1907 was not only crucial for Jung but also for 26-year-old Ludwig Binswanger who at the time was a young trainee doctor who worked in the *Burghölzli* clinic as a student of Jung, carrying further word association studies as part of his doctoral thesis (Fichtner, 2003). The year 1907 was also the year when Jung decided to visit Freud and asked Binswanger to accompany him. Knowing that Binswanger intended to take over the family-run Bellevue Sanatorium, a private psychiatric clinic based in Switzerland, Freud was drawn to Binswanger "on one side for a breach through a wall between official psychiatry and psychoanalysis, as well as for recognition and acquisition of one more fellow campaigner abroad" (Fichtner, 2003, p. xv). Jung seldom writes to Binswanger or about Binswanger in his collection of letters. This lack of communication suggests that the relationship between the two was not a good one for reasons which are not so clear except for disagreement in the way Binswanger led the Swiss Society of the International Psycho-Analytical Association, as the first president (Jung, 1973). Once Binswanger took over the Bellevue Sanatorium in 1910, Freud did refer clients to Binswanger. He also inherited patients who were residents

in the sanatorium for decades, one of whom was Anna O, referred as a patient by Breuer in 1882 (Stadlen, 2018, personal correspondence).

Boss and Binswanger were looking at philosophy for new ways to tackle emotional and mental health problems, taking their patients' paradoxes, conflicts and dreams very seriously, as topics for therapeutic conversations. Du Plock (1996) writes that Binswanger described the use of imagery and metaphor in dreamwork as the authentic language of phenomenology. He rejected the division between neurotic and psychotic disturbances and believed that all experiences are a meaningful part of being-in-the-world. Binswanger also believed that if there is a better phenomenological understanding of consciousness the concept of the unconscious becomes marginalised (Du Plock, 1996).

However, in the correspondences between Freud and Binswanger, there is evidence to suggest that when Binswanger took over the management of the Bellevue Sanatorium, he was still under the belief that all his patients should be analysed (Fichtner, 2003). With time, Binswanger not only had a thorough understanding of Freud's writings, but he was open to learning about the more general psychological theories, philosophy, painters and musicians were among his vast academic and philanthropic interests. Binswanger's thinking took an added turn towards existential philosophy and phenomenological anthropology when he met Heidegger in person in 1929. It was a change from Husserl's (1967) pure phenomenology, to an ontological phenomenology and a more anthropological viewpoint. Binswanger tried to determine "the essence of man as a whole" (Spiegelberg, 1972, p.194), striving for a complete understanding of humankind rather than confining it to a scientific explanation. However, Binswanger struggled to call himself a philosopher, "preferring the more modest designation of Beschreiber or describer" (Marazia, 2011, p.137).

Historians have indeed questioned Binswanger's phenomenological practice as the archived work at the University of Tubingen in Germany falls short of providing detailed evidence of the approach (Marazia, 2011). Verbatims of patients only speak of the pleasant atmosphere of the Bellevue Sanatorium where the "therapies were more humane than elsewhere, where inmates used to dine with their doctors" (Marazia, 2011, p.137). Daseinanalysis, according to Basso (2012), was "conceived at a time when academic psychiatry was still strongly linked to medical disciplines" (p.217). Dream analysis was designed to demonstrate the applicability of practical existential-analytical investigations as a method in describing or distinguishing pathology from the patient's world projects (Basso, 2012). Indeed, expressions, like being thrown down or flying high, were not merely treated like metaphors, but instead, they were a meaning matrix that was inherent to the patient's way of being (Fichtner, 2003). For instance, if we take as a primary example, the dream of falling, the simple act of falling from the body is transferred in the mind during the dream. However, if one views this act of falling as merely an image of expression or a metaphor, it would be a reductive understanding of the other aspects which may be revealed in the dream. The fall may also include the sensation of a weakening in the muscle tone, a reflection which not only encompasses the physical circumstances but also feelings of disappointment, a stumbling of Dasein firmly standing in the world (Binswanger, 1993). Despite Heidegger's urgings for Binswanger to write about this theory of investigation, Binswanger never followed it up. Du Plock (1996) states that according to Binswanger,

> Dreams do not need to be deciphered but can be understood directly as part of the client's way of being-in-the-world, since this approach to dreams, and the view of the unconscious which it entails, comprises the most fundamental challenge to both Freudian and Jungian analysis. (p.38).

Like Binswanger, Medard Boss also gave an important contribution to phenomenological psychiatry. It does not seem that Boss ever had a personal encounter with Jung, but despite never alienating himself from Freud's psychoanalytic theory, he disagreed with the concept of the unconscious, and more specifically he rejected Freud's symbolic theory of dreams (Spiegelberg, 1972). Boss (1963) referred to Freud's symbolic dream theory as the act of forcing the industrialisation of a person's dreaming state into a theoretical straitjacket. Boss (1963) found this approach artificial and was open to learning more from his patients about what therapeutic approaches they found more meaningful. Similarly, to Marazia's (2011) convoluted findings on Binswanger's psychotherapeutic interventions, Stadlen (2003) reports how Boss discussed the castration therapy he implemented on a patient who had severe fetish tendencies during a congress. His intervention led to a huge debate whereby twenty-four psychiatrists published lengthy comments in the journal *Psyche* following this congress, two of whom were Jung and Binswanger. Together with the other members, these practitioners alleged that presenting such a case during a congress was careless and reckless when Boss was also writing and talking about anthropological phenomenology as an intervention with his clients (Stadlen, 2003).

Boss (1963) had a different perspective on the concept of transference and countertransference. Regarding 'transference', rather than supporting the idea that repressed childhood feelings come out as love and hate feelings towards the therapist, Boss (1963) believed that nothing is transferred. Rather than the client appearing to act out feelings of love and hate, the client comes across as infantile and immature on the one hand but still showing genuineness in the expression of these feelings, on the other. A genuine expression according to Boss (1963) indicates that something is unfolding for the first time in the client's life. This unfolding will bring about new behaviours in the client that were

never permitted to him/her, but the therapist is permissive to the unfolding of these feelings even though they may appear as immature. Boss (1963) describes countertransference as a "psychotherapeutic eros" (p.259), a selfless reverence for the client's uniqueness of living. He slowly began to realise that Western psychology was not telling him anything about what human freedom really is. However, Boss (1963) felt that despite his efforts in reading both Western and Eastern psychological, philosophical and religious writings, he was still somewhat unsatisfied with his efforts of acquiring an insightful understanding in the fundamental nature of the human being which according to him, was necessary in the Western culture of psychology and psychotherapy.

Boss (1966) gained the insight he required to develop his thinking around Daseinsanalysis when he went to visit India upon invitation. Boss (1966) was greatly touched by the Eastern mentality which also revered the importance of spirituality, and he quickly concluded that Western psychotherapies needed to improve in their capacity to illuminate the therapeutic space for the client. The focus for Boss (1963) was the daseinanalytic science of lingering with the patients, long enough to become fully aware of the phenomena of their worlds, making no differentiation between the waking and sleeping states.

> If we take the immediately given phenomena of the dreams seriously, we must grant our dreaming state a character of being-in-the-world and of being open to the world, which though different from the waking state is an equally autonomous and a real way of existing, of an understanding, meaning-disclosing relating to what is encountered (Boss, 1963, p. 128).

Boss (1977) believed that dreams could only be viewed as a thing of the past during the waking hours where the available content is only a representation of the reality in the dream. Such an argument, however, is paradoxical because the same being is retained both in the sleeping and in the waking hours. This suggests that Boss (1977) made every effort in

avoiding the split between consciousness and unconsciousness. Rather for Boss (1977) both the dreaming and the waking comprise disclosure and concealment where the dreamer is not a deceiver or the one to be deceived. Rather the continuation between the waking and the sleeping hours opens a realm of different interpretations of the same dream.

Boss' efforts in avoiding this dichotomy in dreamwork were also discussed with Heidegger (2001), the correspondence of which was published in the Zollikon Seminars. Heidegger is in support of Boss' ideologies. He uses the term 'Selbigkeit' to describe the sameness that human beings wake up to in their everydayness. This sameness, however, is not encountered in the same way in dreaming; the comparison between waking and dreaming is not possible for Heidegger and Boss (2001).

> The different way of being in dreaming and waking belongs to the continuity of historicity of the particular human being. It is not possible to compare the state of dreaming and the state of being awake as, for instance, one can compare a fox with an eagle...The dream world cannot be separated as an object domain unto itself, but rather the dream world belongs in a certain way to the continuity of being-in-the-world. It is likewise a being-in-the-world. (Heidegger, 2001, p. 229).

Heidegger believed that stereotypical or recurring dreams keep recurring because the issue has not been resolved and completely worked out in the waking state. Therefore, the return to this issue is alike both in the dreaming and the waking. The story develops, or the problem is resolved through the process of both re-dreaming and re-awakening, there is no return to sameness to either world. Heidegger and Boss (2001) conclude that to see a historical continuity in the process of dreaming, this continuity also needs to be present in the waking. Dreaming to Heidegger and Boss (2001) belongs to the waking life as it is always spoken about in the waking hours. Therefore, waking according to Heidegger, "is the

essential presupposition for being able to talk about dreams at all and interpret them" (2001, p. 230).

Condrau was the second world leading Daseinsanalyst after Boss (Stadlen, 2007). Students at the Zurich Daseinsanalytic Institute are examined on their ability to analyse dreams: "without meeting or communicating with the dreamer, without being told the dreamer's associations to the dream, and without being told anything else except the reported dream and the dreamer's age and sex" (Stadlen, 2007, p. 361). Condrau (1993) states that the reasons why the client is asked to describe the dream have a two-fold objective. "On the one hand, it is to fill the gaps in the dream story, on the other to provide the hermeneutic revelation of the meaning to the dreamer" (Condrau, 1993, p. 5). Young (1993) is the first existential-phenomenological therapist to realise that Condrau's mode of analysis of the dream was still far removed from the dreamer. Young (1993) believed that Condrau's (1993) syle of working with dreams still left all the power of interpretation in the hands of the therapist. "My concern is *who* decides which possibilities are not being actualised... Ultimately it must be for the dreamer to decide the meaning of their dream" (p. 15).

The 1960s brought existential-phenomenological practices to the foreground of public discussion as the United Kingdom was also breaking ground in the field of psychiatry and psychotherapy spearheaded by R.D. Laing. The concept of madness was always a philosophical question rather than a medical one for R.D. Laing (1970). His son A. Laing (2015) writes,

> From the earliest opportunities, he declared that madness was behaviour, to be understood within the context of the patient's own world. His real intention was to find a way in which he could articulate his anger against mainstream psychiatric practices, which he always felt to be infinitely crazier than the utterances and behaviour of the so-called patient. (855/5529).

In his work, 'The Divided Self', R.D. Laing (1970) attempts to give an existential/phenomenological account of schizoid and schizophrenic patients by scrutinising their life experiences describing them as "split, and suffering, isolated and in despair" (p.10). However, from a book review written by R.D. Laing (1957) about Boss' book on 'The Analysis of Dreams', it is evident that R.D.Laing (1957) criticises Boss for being interpretative in his approach and as a result fails to focus purely on the phenomenon of the dream. On the other hand, R.D. Laing (1957) questions how far therapeutic work can be done with no interpretation. In 'The Voice of Experience' Laing (1982) states, that the fundamentalism among psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and other practitioners lies in their use of the language of pathology or diagnosis by stating it yet disclaiming their interpretation as a metaphor. Laing (1982) seems to suggest that there is the danger of misusing metaphor if professionals take too much of an authority over the clients' narratives,

> The fundamentalists among psychiatric theologians have a point when they object to those psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and others, who use the language of symptoms, syndromes and signs, pathology diagnosis, aetiology and treatment, as though they meant it literally, while disclaiming that they do. Of course, they say, it's all a metaphor, (everything's metaphor), but the best we have for present purposes. What are all these metaphorical psychiatrists doing, literally treating metaphorical diseases? (Laing, 1982, p. 43).

Cooper (2017) holds that the problem with the language in psychiatric interventions and analytical therapies was not solved with Daseinsanalysis. Rather the contrary because while it advocated "openness and flexibility, it has its tendencies towards dogmatism and closedness. Perhaps this is part of the reason why Boss never achieved the revolution in psychoanalytic thinking that he hoped for" (p.60). The debate on the use of metaphor will be discussed in more detail in section 2.6.

2.5 American Contributions to Existential-Phenomenological Dreamwork.

Boss' writings (1958, 1977) also found a solid place in the United States of America, despite the limitations drawn out from the European and the British veterans in the field. He was revered as the founding father of existential analysis and was honoured by the American Psychiatric Association with the 'Great Therapist' award (Craig 1993). Craig (1990) affirms that the understanding of existential-phenomenological dreamwork in America is European in origin. Moustakas (1994) believes that Craig tends to apply a Bossian approach to his dreamwork, where he follows a phenomenological approach where "things reveal themselves in dreams as the very things that they are" (Craig, 1990, p.69).

Craig (1990) views dreams as opportunities for what he refers to as "recognised existential possibilities" (p.74) in dealing with familiar daily conundrums, enhancing self-acceptance while still opening the way to personal growth. He also gives case examples of dreaming about "recognised but ignored possibilities" (p.72) and "unrecognised possibilities" (p.73), which we are not at all open to in our waking hours. During a workshop that formed part of the first world congress of existential therapy which took place in London, Craig (2015) argued that the process of unravelling a dream requires the client to remember as much detail as the client can from the dream, explore all its possible meanings, understand its relevance in the client's lifeworld and come up with an interpretation to the dream. Craig (2015) supported Delaney's contribution to how one can go about remembering as much detail of the dream as is possible.

If dreaming is indeed an opportunity for growth and unexplored possibilities, Delaney (1990) holds, that dreamers can make the most of these dreams by incubating the time spent dreaming. She claims that the client will be taught how to choose the right night to dream,

nights, where the client is not overtired, or overly intoxicated with the everydayness. Before going to sleep, the highlight of the day and how it all felt is written down. According to Delaney (1990), this exercise is meant to enhance the client's awareness of thoughts and emotional reactions that may trigger spontaneous dreaming. The issue that the client wishes to dream about is also incubated where the client writes what he or she wishes to dream about. Delaney (1990) believes that writing about what the client wishes to dream about will also stir up feelings. Delaney (1990) encourages the client to repeat the following phrase while the client is falling asleep. Delaney (1990, p. 99) writes,

> You will fall asleep quickly because you are not allowing yourself to ruminate or worry about your problem. As you repeat the phrase, feel the desire to learn something new tonight, to make a shift in your perspective. This is a very comfortable way to fall asleep and is far more productive than counting sheep.

The final stage, as recommended by Delaney (1990) is to record in writing whatever is in the client's mind when waking up. Delaney (1990) states that most often than not, the dream is embedded in metaphors which can be easily overlooked if time is not spent exploring what they mean to the client. The metaphor facilitates the interpretation.

Moustakas (1994) also refers to Delaney's (1990) dream incubation in his work. He encourages the client to audio record the dream, the reason being that the client's remembering of the dream needs to be facilitated with a minimum of effort. Moustakas (1994) writes about the horizons of a dream whereby the client is encouraged to make a connection with people, situations and events both in the dream and the waking life. These horizons are then amplified to reveal new or more in-depth meaning. For instance, if the client recalls that in the dream he was on the phone, Moustakas (1994) will encourage the client to describe what this means to the client in the waking hours.

Moustakas' intervention (1994) is based on the prevalent assumption that the client would have developed such a fixed way in the manner that she or he views things that dreams can provide the possibility to move away from the sedimented way of viewing the world and experience something new which could be further developed in the client's waking hours. As Craig (2012) states that "whereas psychoanalysis is particularly impressed by power and impact of what is unconscious, existential psychotherapists are impressed by the potency of being conscious" (p. 17).

Schneider (2008) also gives an alternative mode of working deeply while being conscious. He talks about developing an embodied meaning of the dream, which is exemplified by the therapist, asking more of the 'what' rather than the 'why' of the dream. The time spent discussing and reflecting about the dreams includes the intertwining of the physiological, environmental, cognitive, psychosexual, interpersonal and experiential levels which according to Schneider (2008) characterise the capacities in which clients constrict, centre or expand themselves. Therefore, the overall aim for Schneider (2008) in his existential-integrative ways of working is to set clients free in their desires and capacity for change.

2.6 Contemporary Practitioners in Existential-Phenomenological Dreamwork.

Young (2005) describes the existential perspective of dreamwork as a unifying force between waking and sleeping hours. Existence is as prevalent in dreams as in waking life. Dreams are for Young (2005) opportunities to self-understand unlived possibilities. "By not attending to our dreams we miss out on a wealth of self-knowledge, we remain only half awake to ourselves" (p. 210). Young (2005) treats dreams as any other phenomena presented in the therapeutic space, leaving it to the dreamer to interpret his/her dreams,

facilitated by the process of questioning in seeking clarification to gain a fuller understanding of the dream experience.

Van Deurzen and Adams (2011) hold that dreams are the product of the imagination which does not only include the conventional dream, but it could also include fantasies, daydreams, the creation of a painting or a poem, a story from a book or a film that have significance in the clients' lives. However, whilst Van Deurzen and Adams (2011) describe how dreams can contain references to the four existential dimensions as described further down below, they still use a psychoanalytic word to describe the process of working with the dream but give it a different definition to that of Freud (1954). Whilst Freud (1954) defines the dream's content as being overdetermined as meaning "represented in the dream-thoughts many times over" (p.283), Van Deurzen and Adams (2011) compare it to poems and just "like poems, dreams gain their power from having multiple resonances, from being both/and rather than either/or. In this way they are overdetermined. This means that there is no one correct – or two or three for that matter – meaning to a dream" (p. 96). The difference lies in the perspective, that the dream is always decided by the dreamer, where clients can explore both the presence and absence of existential issues phenomenologically. The clients are encouraged to tell the dream as it was experienced, investigating it systematically by presenting open questions to the clients of the four existential dimensions. In the physical dimension, the familiarity or unfamiliarity of the content is explored. In the social dimension, the clients have the space to explore who the people in their dream were while in the personal dimension, the clients' sense of identity is explored in depth. In the spiritual dimension, the clients can explore the meaningfulness of the dream, wondering about the relevance of all of this in their lives.

Cohn (1997) describes dreams as “openings to be attended to” (p. 205) like Heidegger’s (1962) definition of truth as ‘the unconcealed’ or ‘the uncovered’. Spinelli (2015) believes that dreams serve as bridges to new meanings where “the exploration of dreams can be a deeply intimate enterprise in that dreams have the potential of revealing us in a very direct, often raw, ways that may disclose more than do our more guarded waking-world discourses” (p.206). Similarly, to Van Deurzen and Adams (2011), Spinelli (2015) will ask the client to recount what he/she remembers of the dream, inviting the client to offer additional information. Rather than using the four existential dimensions to open the narrational scene, Spinelli (2015) will invite the client not only to contextualise the dream spatially and temporally when it comes to dreaming objects and the dreamer, but the client is also encouraged to act out the actions in the dream inviting further thought as well as feelings. The use of the body in the interpretation of the dream resonates with Gendlin’s (2018) work on dreamwork. Gendlin (2018) holds that the dream leaves a felt sense which is not just an emotion. “It is a bodily quality, like heavy, sticky, jumpy, fluttery, tight. At first it has no fitting label. It is the way the middle of your body feel” (p. 53). After ample clarification, the various key relational constituents to the dream are identified, and the client is asked to select the items which provoke curiosity inviting further discussion, challenging the client through further clarification or description of the dream material. Langdridge (2018) also presents an interesting way of working with dreams by using Ashworth’s fractions of the lifeworld, fractions (Ashworth, 2016) which have been drawn from existential and phenomenological literature. The fractions include selfhood (a subjective understanding of who we are), sociality (how human beings are in relation with others), embodiment (how it features in our embodied experience), temporality (how to use the sense of time), spatiality (deals with the person’s position in the world), project

(activities that are central to the person's life) and discourse (the language used to describe the experience). Langdridge (2018) holds that it is critical to understand the client's narrative identities as manifested in the dream as it offers a safe space to come face to face with one's own identity. The purpose of these fractions in dreamwork is to give clients an ontic experience of the dream in the here and now, in a more structured and directive way. The mood the client brings whilst relating the dream narrative becomes central in the meaning-making process of the dream. Specific words are explored in depth in both their definition as provided by the client and the significance of these words in the waking context.

2.7 Metaphor in Dreams.

There have been many instances in the sections above where dream interpretations were thoroughly infused with metaphor. Leary (1995) seems dissatisfied with the definition that metaphor is a figure of speech that is taken from a literal thought or thing but is suggestive of something else. Indeed, he makes many attempts at broadening its definition and its general applicability in theoretical developments in the area of psychology but does not attempt at exploring the use of metaphor in dreams. Leary (1995) criticises Freud for over-relying on a series of metaphors to a more restrictive and prescriptive series of comparisons to develop his theory. Siegelman (1990) attempts at defining the concept of metaphor as she explores it in psychotherapy. She states that the concept of a metaphor becomes useful in expanding a larger domain of meaning-making. She describes metaphor as a rather paradoxical term as it cannot be reduced to language. Metaphors can also be auditory, gustatory, tactile and even kinesthetic when carried in the body. "We taste our patients' sorrow; we are touched by their pleasure; we often feel the rightness of our intuition about

them. So, the paradox is that the vividly sensuous becomes a vehicle for wider meaning" (Seigelman, 1990, p. 7).

Kopp (1995), on the other hand, holds that the use of metaphor can be applied to any form of therapy. He introduces ways of how to work with client-generated metaphors, where the interpretation is co-constructed with the client. The metaphors can either be spontaneous or can come from the client's early childhood memories. Kopp (1995) comes up with six metaphoric structures on an individual level which includes the relation of the self with itself, others and the world; metaphorical structures at a family level where it explores communication and behaviours in the family dynamic, sociocultural and transcultural levels which necessitate the use of language. Kopp (1995) emphasises the importance that there is no additional content that is provided from the therapist's experience or knowledge. The intention is to empower the client to change the metaphorical imagery beyond cultural influences, stereotypes or generalisations. Kopp (1995) gives an example of how metaphor transcends the culture it is embedded in once the meaning is developed. Therefore, just as the dove is a bird that flies gracefully, glides silently, and is typically seen coming out of the sky and landing among people, so is it also the symbol of the Holy Spirit in Christian theology. Therefore, the attributes of the physical bird, when developed linguistically within a specific culture with all its traditions, transform into symbolic metonymies. This process provides an essential means of understanding what is abstract in our physical experience.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) present a vibrant and detailed linguistic repertoire of metaphorical construction in the use of everyday language. For instance, in ontological metaphors, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) hold that our experience with physical objects can vary widely offering a spectrum of a discreet and bounded experience on the one hand and

an extraordinarily broad view of events, activities or emotions on the other. Considering that Lakoff and Johnson (2003) are cognitive linguistics, they tend to implement a behaviour analysis when working with metaphors therapeutically. Törneke (2017) who also combines the behavioural and linguistic science of metaphor builds on Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) ideology by defining metaphor as a tact where the trigger to the metaphor may not be the object or event that evokes the response. It could be a frozen metaphor or a dead metaphor and not situated in the here and now but if it is functionally important and therefore related to an aspect of the client's behaviour then there is a therapeutic value to it, and the direction of the therapy is clarified through the metaphor. One would notice that the literature on metaphor moves progressively in the direction of cognitive behaviour therapy where the power is falling back into the hands of the clinician. The metaphor almost becomes a trigger for the therapist that there is something that clients 'must' understand and the therapist 'should' help clients become aware of what is happening to them. The clients do not make their interpretation but are led to make their interpretation "gathering sequences of the material that are skillfully arranged by the clinician" (Cohen, 2018, p. 28). The use of metaphor is depicted as providing certainty, suggesting solutions to problems (Barker, 1985), constructing prescriptive metaphors based on the assumption that the therapist knows what sort of responses clients will create (Battino, 2002). The therapist assumes a certain homogeneity applying the interpretation of the metaphor to the same condition but disregards the individual. It comes as no surprise when Gendlin (2018) wrote that,

> Different schools of psychotherapy can be recognised in these different emphases on what the content of psychotherapy ought to be. It is also recognized that all schools of psychotherapy report roughly the same degree of success and that in all of them experienced therapists have better results than inexperienced ones. Hence,

> the assertion is often made that in some yet unknown way the same process occurs in all of them. (p.51).

Indeed, it is no wonder that brains scan are now being utilised to unveil some of the mysteries of dreaming. Kaku (2014) states that in Kyoto, Japan it is possible to photograph a dream. Will it be possible in the future to read feelings and complicated emotional states while dreaming? The Kyoto scientists believe this is possible (Kaku, 2014).

2.8 Electrical Brainwave Activity in Sleeping and Dreaming.

The 1950s and 1960s are also of interest in that while Boss and Heidegger were corresponding with each other, scientists started experimenting with brainwave activity observing the changes that occur in people's brains when entering into REM sleep and starting to dream. Brainwave activity was also reconstructed using three-dimensional visualisations, and this activity was seen mainly in autobiographical memory, including the hippocampus. Activity in these areas of the brain suggests that dreaming contains memories of the more recent experiences (Walker, 2017). However, from an experiment conducted at Harvard University researchers explored the extent to which dreams are merely a replay of recent waking experiences (Walker, 2017). Two hundred and ninety-nine reports from different participants showed that residues of the day were just shown in 1 or 2 per cent of the locations, actions, objects, characters, and emotions that were recorded by the participants in their dream journals (Walker, 2017). Scientists who continue their experiments of sleeping and dreaming deduce that dreaming is a soothing balm that further supports the benefits derived from REM sleep. "REM-sleep dreaming offers a form of overnight therapy, takes the painful sting out of difficult, even traumatic, emotional episodes you have experienced during the day, offering an emotional resolution when you

awake next morning" (Walker, 2017, p. 207). Scientists believe that some dreamers are lucid and can control their dreams or problem-solve the situation in the dream as soon as the dreamer becomes aware of it (Walker, 2017).

2.9 Lucid Dreaming.

Laberge (Laberge & Rheingold, 1990) who is an American psychophysiologist specialised in lucid dreaming has experimented with several devices to assist the dreamer in entering the dream in a lucid state. The most recent development has been the device which consists of an LED mask and which is worn over the eyes. The mask is designed to flash as soon as the dreamer enters REM sleep, where the dreamer recognises that he is dreaming. The objective is to give the dreamer the possibility to influence the outcome of the dream consciously. They can change and transform objects, people, situations and even themselves in an all too familiar world (Laberge & Rheingold, 1990). A step-by-step approach is provided to people who wish to learn the skill. The skills learnt range from keeping a journal to improve one's recollection of the dream to set the time for lucid dreaming to occur, to practising a series of relaxation techniques, exercises which are important to clear one's mind of the day's worries. The relaxation task needs to be practised often as it covers the attended focus on sixty-one different points which are situated in the body. Kaku (2014) holds that brain scans have shown that lucid dreamers are partially conscious while dreaming. So in the light of the above literature when consciousness was attributed only to the waking hours, and later continuing new narratives that have started in the sleeping hours, how does this work out when consciousness is present in the sleeping hours? This is as far as the literature review can cover.

2.10 Final Thoughts.

Moja-Strasser (1997) wrote that "working with dreams from an existential-phenomenological perspective is in many respects simpler than Freud's approach to dream analysis" (p.110). An extensive search was done on the British Library E-Theses online service (EThOS), where it was found that between 1992 and 2021, there were 796 doctoral dissertations on dreams dreams, in universities across the United Kingdom, but only one specifically covered existential-phenomenological aspects of dreamwork. If it is indeed that easy, what is keeping therapists from researching existential-phenomenological dreamwork?

In his doctoral research, Smith (2013) found that the relational dimension to dreamwork was a predominant theme that was shared by his four participants. Dreams presented alternative ways for clients to communicate issues to their therapists both on a content and process level. Smith (2013) also reported a tension whereby his participants who were existential practitioners, found it difficult to work with metaphor and remain phenomenological. On the other hand, some of his participants had no difficulties in using symbolism to make sense of clients' dreams. It also seems that not all of Smith's (2013) participants were as enthusiastic about working with dreams, and the manner they worked with dreams presented some subtle differences, particularly what they chose to integrate from other approaches when working with dreams; namely symbolism with psychoanalytic roots and Jungian telepathic dream dimensions. Smith's (2013) participants also reported that dreamwork is also considered as an intervention when clients feel 'stuck' in therapy.

Moreover, it was interesting to note that Smith's (2013) participants reported that they felt at ease with the idea that existential-phenomenological theory on how to work with dreams was limited. Indeed he reported that his participants felt that no theory was necessary when it comes to dreamwork. Moreover, Smith (2013) seems to have a dilemma as to how far a therapist can work with clients' dreams, especially if the client finds it difficult to recall the dream or finds recalling the dream a harrowing experience. Smith's (2013) conclusions, therefore are conflictual as while on the one hand, he questions how ethical it is for a therapist to work with these ambiguities, on the other hand, he also states that dreamwork offers something different to the therapeutic space.

Journal publications of the Society for Existential Analysis (SEA) in the field of existential-phenomenological dreamwork are also rather scarce, where most of the papers are a reaction to or an appreciation of the work of Boss and Condrau on daseinanalytic dreamwork and Freud's psychoanalytic terminology around the unconscious (Young, 1993; Spinelli, 1993, Stadlen, 2007, Montenegro, 2015).

Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974) in their chapter on terrible simplifications write that "one way of mishandling a problem is to behave as if it did not exist" (p. 46). Having re-written this literature review after writing the final chapter as is pertinent with Constructivist Grounded Theory, makes me realise that this endeavour was not about re-inventing the wheel, but to have my own experience of the practice of existential-phenomenological dreamwork in the present moment. The nuances of all these shades in working with existential-phenomenological dreams will be further explored in Chapter 2 by describing the epistemological and ontological position which informed my choice of

research method wherein I used a constructivist grounded theory approach with a critical realist orientation to the findings.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3. Introduction.

This chapter provides the reader with a rationale for the methodology of choice which is Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT), and the reasons behind this preference compared to other methods. The main research question is 'How do existential-phenomenological therapists work with dreams?' First, I was interested in exploring new theoretical aspects that could contribute to the already existing field of existential-phenomenological dreamwork. Second, I wanted to clarify the concept of metaphor, specifically existential metaphor and the process involved in conceptualising these metaphors. Third, I wanted to look at the potential variations in the participants' dreamwork practice since existential therapy does not impose a predetermined framework of meaning (Langridge, 2018). Overall, I wish to have the opportunity to understand the implications that the research findings have on the counselling psychology profession.

To understand better my motivation behind this research question, I describe my epistemological and ontological position as the researcher. I complement this position by taking a critical realist ontological perspective where theoretical sensitivity is at the

foreground of constructivist research. An overview of the method procedure is then presented in both written and diagrammatic form. Considerations of other research methods are discussed together with an awareness of the limitations in the method of choice. I describe how the iterative process of the constructivist grounded theory approach transforms an initial literature review (chapter 2) into a more expanded discussion in the findings chapter (chapter 5), which may include references to literature that do not appear in Chapter 2. I have also included a description of the inclusion criteria of the eleven participants involved in the study, a reflection around the choice of interview questions for the first cycle and how these categories become the discussion of the second interview.

3.1 Stages of the research process in Constructivist Grounded Theory.

According to Charmaz (2017), there is a striking difference between the classic Grounded Theory (GT) and Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT). Whilst Grounded Theory holds an objectivist view with no preconceptions of earlier research, CGT examines the extent of earlier influences in the field of research. Secondly, in GT the data gathered is considered unproblematic and will aim to eliminate the differences in the information given, where reflexivity is also made redundant (Charmaz, 2017). GT not only erases differences amongst people but also groups, cultures and societies, time, place and situations. On the other hand, in CGT the researcher grapples with preconceptions as data is co-constructed in a specific time, place and situation. The relationship between the researcher and the participants matters, where reflexivity becomes crucial (Charmaz, 2017).

A CGT method of research consists of a systematic guideline for collecting and analysing qualitative data in constructing theory. The data is collected through observations, interactions and materials that are gathered around the topic. In the constructivist approach of grounded theory, the researcher is no longer assumed to be passive or unbiased.

Moreover, this method adopts the comparative and emergent approach of previous grounded theory methods, where there is not only an emphasis on both action and meaning but also the researcher's subjectivity, sharing one's viewpoint in the interaction. Charmaz (2014) indeed holds that "we are part of the world we study, the data we collect, and the analyses we produce. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research" (p. 17).

Corbin and Strauss (2015) moved away from Glaser's objective approach to a more structured one regarding the Grounded Theory Method. They try to capture the complexities of real-life experiences using an extensive, procedural, elaborative saturating process of participants' responses to specific events occurring in their lives. For example, a problem or a curiosity around a research topic is pre-identified and verified through a rigorous research process of the participants' phenomenological field and then moving on to the specifications of constructing this reality. Annells (1997) suggests that their approach was a massive effort towards constructivism. However, it seems that they did not capture Charmaz's within-methods triangulation where several approaches are combined in the one method, which may include several strategies in collecting data which not only include talking to the participants but also presenting documents to be discussed further (Flick, 2019).

More importantly, there seems to be a clear distinction in how the transcripts from the interviews are coded. In the grounded theory methodology of Corbin and Strauss (2015), open coding takes place, where the data is broken down into analytical pieces, and a memo note is written per piece where researchers reflect on their thinking while analysing the piece. Each memo allows space for other researchers to challenge the researcher's

interpretation. Charmaz's (2014) coding, on the other hand, is broken down into smaller pieces where initial coding takes place either word by word or line by line. Charmaz (2014) holds that this kind of coding helps the researcher think of new ways of how to engage with the material, which interpretation may differ from that of the research participants. Charmaz holds that the advantage of breaking down the coding process further, as seen in Figure 1, is that it may present a phenomenon that participants may not have experienced so explicitly before. The researcher, in turn, is then able to check her preconceptions about the topic, allowing her to stay with the emergence of the data and gradually apply theory to these codes.

Figure 1 demonstrates the process that the use of a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) method entails. CGT is the process of seeking the construction of meaning around issues that are considered important to the researcher and to a specific group of people, where the aim is to make meaning of those issues through the process of analysis and modelling of theory (Mills et al., 2006). Constructivist thinkers such as Breckenridge et al. (2012) assert that when meaning is constructed and assigned to specific issues, a new reality forms, which informs the people who create them, but it also informs the world around them. Figure 1 below is being cited from Tweed and Charmaz (2012), and it is a CGT diagram that comes closest to how the method was used in this research.

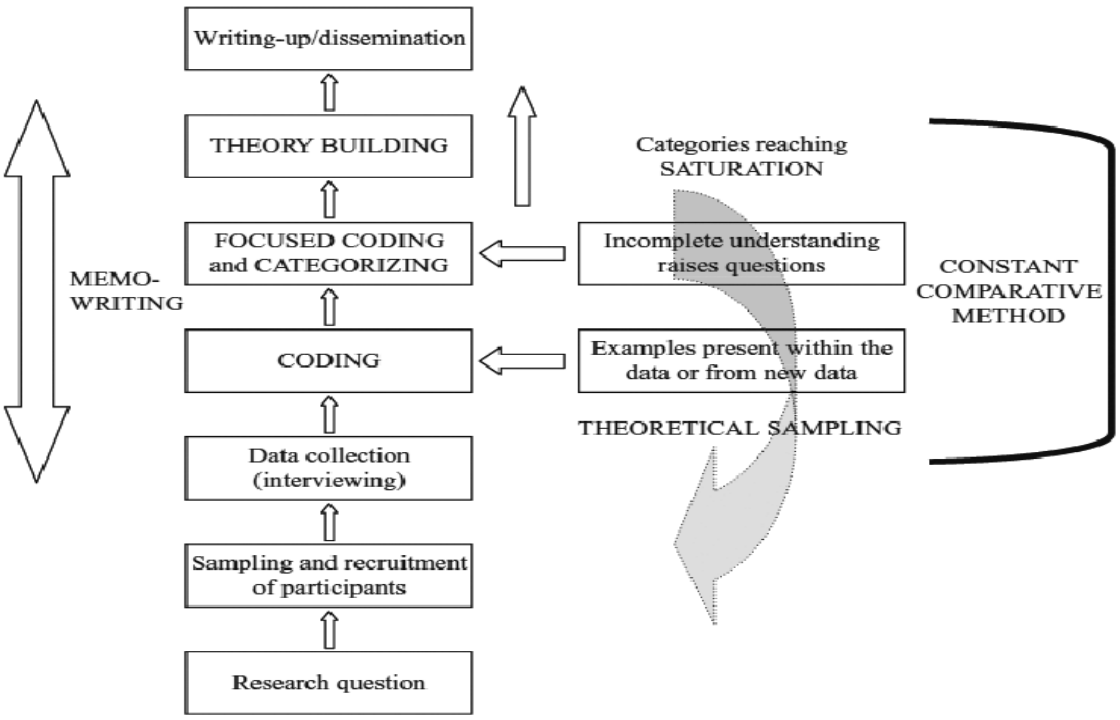


Figure 1

Constructivist Grounded Theory Process. Tweed and Charmaz (2012)

The original form of grounded theory was developed by Glaser (2012) and described as ontologically and epistemologically neutral, where all is data (Glaser, 2012) and where extensive reading in the literature only occurs when the research itself has provided enough theory. Leaving the literature review as the last thing that the researcher would do, is one of the reasons why I did not choose the classic version, as I would have had to suspend what I knew about the research topic. Poerksen (2004) holds that when a researcher displays a style "which excludes stories, parables, creative metaphors, and the description of personal thinking experiences, and who is particular, clearly banishes all personal expressions from texts, must appear to write in a mode stror ksen (2004) argues that this is a contradiction as ality, authority, and thus certainty, it is incompatible with the constructivist belief to openness to an "observer bound manner of presentation and discourse" (p.xii). Charmaz (in Thornberg &

Dunne, 2019) recommends starting with an initial literature review which is not the same as the final literature review.

Figure 1 does not clearly show the evolution in the literature review. For this research, I will describe the three phases in writing the literature review and how it evolves. During the first phase, there is an initial literature review establishing the researcher's primary interest. In the second phase, an ongoing literature review takes place during the data collection process. In the third and final phase, the final literature review occurs towards the study's end when the researcher has identified theoretical references points that can be compared to the existing knowledge.

3.2 A reflection on the consideration of other research methods.

Other methods for this research study were considered aside from CGT. One alternative was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which purports that the researcher makes sense of the participant's understanding of their experiences of working therapeutically with dreams.

Shinebourne (2011) holds that in IPA participants try to make sense of their lifeworld since the research questions are more directed towards meaning. The researcher aims to do this by bracketing any assumptions, prejudices, and misconceptions she may have, prioritising the phenomenon as seen by the participants. Smith et al. (2009) hold that skilful attention is given to bracketing the researcher's concerns. The IPA method is specifically focused on identifying what matters to participants to eventually arrive at what things mean to participants (Larkin and Thompson, 2012).

The reason why I could not choose IPA is that the emphasis would have remained on gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of participants who are engaging with the phenomenon of clients' dreams. I also feel that the researcher's standpoint when using IPA is less collaborative because of the need to respect the participants' phenomenological accounts. Therefore, the onus of the power remains in the subjective experiences of the participants. Still, this same power is never shared with the researcher and will remain an observer to the phenomenon rather than a participant and a collaborator. Moreover, the goals of the CGT method are to develop a theoretical framework to study basic psychological processes, which includes the impact, in this case, on training doctoral students to include dreamwork in their practice. "With apparent parallels in terms of researcher reflexivity and the self-reflection of therapists, psychotherapists have also seen grounded theory as a suitable method for psychotherapy research including systemic therapy, psychoanalytic research" (Tweed & Charmaz, 2011, p. 134), and I would add existential-phenomenological therapy.

The second alternative methodological approach was Action Research, where according to Heron and Reason (2008), the researcher brings the participants together to share their skills and challenge each other's style of working with dreams. The encounters are direct and take place face to face. Each action and reflection comprise an engagement with a cycle of four ways of knowing. The first cycle is being present in the experiential relationship with other participants, including the researcher. In the second stage of knowing, participants reveal their knowledge through expressive imagery. More ideas and theories emerge in the third cycle of knowing, while in the fourth cycle of knowing participants describe the practicalities of their knowledge which in the case of this research, participants have all the space to talk about their styles of working with dreams and to share their skills or otherwise

challenge the working style of other participants. The objective of these cycles would have been to explore whether there is enough evidence to support the claims that are made (Heron & Reason, 2008). This research method would have been considered if it was not possible to meet the eleven participants on an individual basis. On the other hand, this research method does not allow for the emergence of a new theory pertinent to CGT. Rather the whole process remains driven by the participants themselves, where the researcher is empowered by what the participants can construct when using their knowledge. What the two methods have in common is that both the constructivist grounded theory method and action research allow for a collaborative process and new ways of thinking about the quality of the research, with the want to influence academic practice. This level of richness in how the participants would have asserted themselves in their respective styles of existential/phenomenological research would also have been exciting to explore.

Discourse Analysis (DA) was also considered as a third methodological alternative, where spoken, written language and text are analysed using multimodal resources to bring out the different meanings and understandings of the topic under scrutiny. The starting principle of Discourse Analysis is the investigation of spoken or written language and text. Hollway (1989) rejects versions of discourse analysis, which primarily include cognitive linguistics, or which focus only on the individual. Instead, she creates a psychological method of discourse where she incorporates and applies interpretation containing questions about the relation between subjectivity and meaning. Hollway (1989) challenges the assumption that the researcher and the participants use the same discourse. The choice of methodology does not facilitate this mess, but the onus is on the researcher dealing with this complexity. Discourse analysis posits different meanings to the same subject of discussion. Wang (2018)

refers to discourse as the actual use of language along with other multimodal resources: “facial expressions, gazes, gestures, body movement, artefacts and material settings to accomplish actions, negotiate identities and construct ideologies” (p. 8). Waring (2018) describes discourse analysis as a structured deconstruction and categorisation of all the compositions of discourse, the entities of which are talk, text and nonverbal conduct. The object of inquiry remains the structure of these narratives. Despite having analysed my participants’ discourse line by line and despite including the politics of how to negotiate their unique identities in the existential circle, I feel that had I stopped at these narratives of discourse and only analysed the structured categories, there would have been little relevance to the participants’ internal experience, of how the world is for them as human beings and not merely as therapists. It seems that the notion of discourse only integrates the language of beliefs, values and thought processes as objects for the researcher to enact a socially recognisable identity. Thus, this method could only lead to an objective epistemology rather than a subjective one. If I had chosen discourse as my analysis of choice, it would not have encompassed the participants’ authentic experience of Being with their clients in the therapeutic relationship.

3.3 Limitations of Constructivist Grounded Theory.

Of course, the decision to settle on using a constructivist approach to Grounded Theory does not happen without difficulty or limitation. The anticipated difficulty with the CGT approach is that it might have proved to be challenging to find enough participants to be able to have at least twenty transcribed interviews since this method requires extensive enough data to reach saturation. This requirement is in itself paradoxical, however, as Charmaz (2014) also holds that even though the grounded theory approach is an efficient

method of inquiry, the data collected from a small number of interviews does not guarantee any original contribution to the field in question. The reasoning behind her argument is that themes continue to emerge without reaching certainty in the conclusions, and as a result, a saturation of data is seldom reached. For there to be saturation of data, the researcher would have to reach a point in their data analysis that sampling more data will not lead to more information.

Moreover, there is the continuous challenge of bracketing the researcher's background knowledge and experience. This tension between the researcher's acquired knowledge and what brought her to the research in the first place and the participants' personal and informative experiences, remained a constant struggle throughout the analytical process. For instance, it was often the case that I needed to dig into different perspectives in dreamwork that my participants brought to my attention. I was unfamiliar with the work on Gendlin's (2018) use of the body to interpret dreams, where old situations are brought into new situations, and old words are given a new meaning, potentially carrying a message with no intention of hiding it. Indeed Gendlin (2018) states that the dream does not hide the message in metaphorical code, "the dream is born metaphorically" (p. 150). And it was even trickier when only one participant mentioned a specific theory, making it more challenging to include all the many perspectives. I recall resisting the temptation of quoting aspects of Gendlin's work which struck me and opening aspects in the dreamwork of my own doing.

I also felt it pertinent to bracket experiences with other schools for dreamwork which I had visited or familiarised myself with, such as the work of Desoillian school situated in France and Milan, the Lacanian and the Gestaltian approach which was not mentioned by the

participants. I frequented seminars organised by historians in psychoanalysis to get a more precise sequence of events. I attended a conference in Jungian analysis apart from all the conferences I attended in London on existential therapy. The above efforts were not without difficulty, so therapy was needed for all my setbacks, impasses, meltdowns and chronic anxiety because of the constant fear that I was never going to see the end of my exploration. There seemed to be too much to assimilate whilst remaining focused on the research question. I tried to mitigate these drawbacks by giving the participants more space between one interview and another. Indeed, the second cycle of interviews was richer, deeper, provocative and more diverse in terms of how the participants described their style of working with dreams.

3.4 Criteria for Participation.

Charmaz (2014) holds that the number of interviews depends on the research purpose when it comes to qualitative research studies. The rationale behind having eleven participants depended on how many people I could get to talk to me on the subject in question. Three participants were recruited from the Society of Existential Analysis (SEA) and the New School for Psychotherapy (NSPC) after an advert for research participation was posted on their respective Facebook pages. Another eight participants were recruited through snowball sampling, where the first participant got in touch with other existential psychotherapists and counselling psychologists.

Since most of the participants come from a small community of senior existential-phenomenological therapists based in London or the vicinity, I have organised the

information in a table over a wider age range to ensure anonymity, whereby they cannot be easily traced. Moreover, selecting participants in the London area created some form of homogeneity.

Ten participants were interviewed twice where the second interview took place only after the first cycle of interviews was completed with all the participants. An eleventh participant was recruited just before the second cycle of interviews since one of the participants was uncertain as to whether he would be available for a second interview. I was aware that the 11th participant had only 13 years of experience while I had established the criterion of 15 years of experience. Fortunately, the 10th participant made it for the second interview. It was possible to interview all ten participants twice round, and only one interview was done with the eleventh participant. The eleventh participant was so keen on dreamwork that his/her insight enriched the interview process significantly, and I decided to include it in the analysis anyway. It took one year and six months to go through the two cycles of interviews. By the time I arrived at the 21st interview, the emerging categories were saturated enough to build a discussion. All the interviews were between one hour and one hour twenty minutes long. I contacted participants via direct email, giving them an outline of the research question, the rationale for the study and the method of analysis. An information sheet delineating the purpose of this research was sent to all the interested participants (Appendix A). Once participants agreed to participate, a consent form then followed (Appendix B), gaining permission to record the interview while also informing participants of anonymity and their ability to withdraw from the study at any point.

Finally, a debriefing letter (Appendix C) was sent to all the participants, thanking them for participating in the research inviting them for further opportunities of exploration, which could be relevant to the research.

Table 1 – Age range and gender of each participant.

	Participants over 65 years	Participants over 40 years
Male	P1, P5, P6, P10	P7, P9, P11
Female	P3, P4, P8	P2

Table 1 indicates the age and gender of each participant. All the participants were trained in existential therapy either as existential psychotherapists or existential counselling psychologists or hold both recognitions. Two of the participants were both counselling psychologists and existential psychotherapists and the other nine participants were existential psychotherapists. The post-qualifying years of experience of the participants ranged between 15 to 50 years. The participants needed to have a minimum of 15 years of post-qualifying experience to be eligible to participate in this study, except for the 11th participant who had 13 years of experience, reasons of which have been given above. The reason why participants needed to be experienced practitioners is that working with dreams requires an in-depth process of one's dreams and the prospective participants needed to be interested in the subject. Nine participants see clients regularly, whilst two of the participants have a less-regular client-load since they are semi-retired.

Table 2 *– Participants' Training Institutions.*

Training Institutions	Regent University	NSPC	Trained in other countries	Co-opted
No. of Participants	6	2	3	1

All the participants were trained in existential-phenomenological therapy albeit from different institutions, as this depended on what was available when each participant decided to do the training.

3.5 Interviewing and Data Collection.

Morse and Clark (2019) hold that the "researcher's understanding builds incrementally as the study progresses; who is invited to participate in the study is determined by what they know about the topic and what they can contribute" (p. 145). Despite being a small group of participants, I felt they were indeed the best people to contribute to this topic as all of the participants had a lot of experience of working with dreams phenomenologically. It was difficult to keep to an hour's interview, and this always exceeded the time by some minutes up to a maximum of an extra half an hour. Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory approach builds on the idea that the researcher maintains flexibility in using such strategies in her ways of conducting research.

The purpose of using semi-structured interviews during the first cycle was to focus on the subject while allowing for open-ended questioning. Moreover, I was interested in knowing more about how these therapists developed their working styles and how this, in turn, informed their way of being existential psychotherapists. For the second cycle, I organised the emerging categories in a written paper and sent it to the participants beforehand to have the time to read through it (Appendix D). First, there were instances when I requested more detail and explanation around specific themes. Second, to be completely faithful to the approach, I left enough open space so the participants would always be in the lead. Indeed Charmaz (2014, p.27) holds that the data collection "flows from the research question…bringing about methodological eclecticism."

The interview questions were categorised into three specific stages according to Charmaz's method. The first set of questions is intended to be broad to invite detailed discussion about what is existential and what is phenomenological in working with dreams by opening up the subject but at the same time narrowing it enough for the participants to elaborate on this specific subject:

- Could you describe how you go about working with dreams phenomenologically?
- How do you try to go to the meaning of the dream? What does that look like? How do you exactly do that?
- In what ways do you go about working with dreams existentially?
- What influences your phenomenological/existential ways of working with dreams?
- What other fields of thought (if any) contribute to your existential ways of working with dreams?

In the intermediate stage, these interview questions are intended to delve into the tough areas and attempt to elicit the participant views of their experience of working with dreams following Charmaz' (2014) ideas of what the intermediate stage should entail. This is where I asked participants to describe specific ways of working, definitions of complex terms and the interweaving process of including other psychotherapeutic strategies:

- Could you describe a therapeutic session with a client, which involved dreamwork?
- What do you understand by existential metaphor? Does it feature in dreamwork?
- Do you have your style of working with dreams?
- Are there any psychotherapeutic concepts other than your existential-oriented training that inform your ways of working?
- Do you experience any challenges of integrating other psychotherapeutic strategies within existential ways of working?

Charmaz (2014) holds that no interview should end abruptly, particularly after the more demanding questions, which may have caused discomfort or disagreement. Instead, the ending stage explores the participants' interpretation of their dreams and provides closure to the participants where they are invited to give their recommendations which are not only pertinent to the research process but may also be relevant to other contemporary practitioners in the field:

> *- How do you support a client to make sense of his/her dream? Can you give me an example?*
>
> *- Has your way of working with dreams changed over time?*
>
> *- Does it change depending on the client? In what ways?*
>
> *-What modes of practice would you recommend to other existential/phenomenological practitioners who are keen to know more about how to work with dreams?*
>
> *- Is there anything else you would need to tell me to understand better how you practice?*
>
> *- We are close to the end of our interview, is there something which you might not have thought about before but is occurring to you now with regards to the topic of dreams?*

The questions were drawn from my background knowledge and preconceptions. When it came to existential-phenomenological dreamwork, I had read extensively around the work published by existential philosophers, thinkers and practitioners, and I was left with many questions. Charmaz (2014) argues that the questions asked in the initial interviews should not link in any way to the researcher's personal experiences so that the research does not start with an immediate and apparent bias, which is primarily the narrow view of the researcher. Moreover, Coolican (2014) holds that any pre-set questions may not be asked in the order that the questions have been planned out. There may be unanswered questions that will be returned until they have been fully answered. Bracketing the researcher's

understanding of existential/phenomenological dreamwork was precisely why it was important to strike the right balance in having openness in the interview questions and grounding them in the specific objectives of the research question. I was also curious to know how these practitioners are working with dreams and what other schools of thought they are applying in addition to their field of expertise.

3.6 Transitioning from the pilot study to the first cycle of interviews.

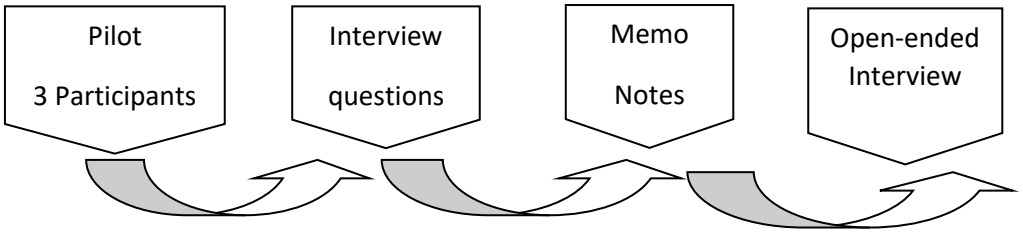


Figure 2 – An overview of the Pilot Stage.

I set out to pilot this study in three stages. Initially, I wanted to see whether the questions were clear, and I used one of my therapy sessions to talk through the questions. My existential therapist was always keen to work with my dreams, and this was the best space to check that they weren't narrowed down to my own experience. A discussion around how I felt being asked these questions helped me in refining them. I then interviewed a volunteer who is more of an integrative practitioner, which helped me widen the view in the intermediate stage of the inquiry, particularly in the possibility that my participants may as well have developed the ability to integrate other therapeutic ways of working with dreams. As much as possible, I wished that the start should not be blocked by a preconceived problem by being too fixed on what I wished to see happening in the research process. This pilot stage was indeed an eye-opener. An open view of these interviews was the right step

to challenging my preconceptions. I did not include either of the above interviews in my analysis.

Glaser (2014) states that the “best way to do grounded theory is to just do it” (p.384) as all grounded theory methods have an open and honest approach to an emergent methodology. Thirdly, when I was satisfied with the changes made to my interview questions, I proceeded to interview three of my participants. It was a varied sample as the initial reactions were both positive and negative. Morse and Clark (2019) hold that this process is typical of research in its initial stages, “you begin working with abstract categories and must transition to theoretical sampling” (p. 155). They define the movement from the first cycle to the second cycle of interviews as a transition point, an ambiguous territory where data needs time to saturate enough until theoretical coding starts to emerge. Glaser (2014) holds that

> a researcher requires two essential characteristics for the development of theoretical sensitivity. First, he or she must have the personal and temperamental bent to maintain analytic distance, tolerate confusion and regression while remaining open, trusting the movement from preconscious processing to conceptual emergence. Second, he/she must have the ability to develop theoretical insight into the area of research combined with the ability to make something of these insights (p. 384).

When I started engaging with the emerging themes across interviews, I became aware of my subjective views on what I chose to focus on and what would become relevant and important within my vision for this research. Whilst I handled the interview questions, I observed that the participants dismissed or were reluctant to answer the question to describe a dream that they would have worked through with their client. Only participants P2 and P10 offered excerpts from dreams. Why didn’t they jump at the opportunity? Considering their maturity in the profession and their age and experience, the participants

were focused more on the process of dreamwork. These difficulties are an example of how research can get messy. I found the answers, but they were not the answers that I was expecting. This is the beauty of research. Indeed, this is the beauty of CGT, as the researcher is open to surprises. The participants were all very powerful people and were keen to involve me in conversation. I was the youngest peer, and I allowed them to take me by the hand. Towards the end of the analysis, I realised that the participants had offered me alternative ways to see things. Their narratives were very much about the process they go through with each client, rather than defining something. Law (2004) states that this flux can be so messy that the researcher would need to unmake some methodological issues while engaging with her data. Such problems include "the need for certainty, the expectation that we can usually arrive at more or less stable conclusions, the belief that as social scientists we have a special insight that allows us to see further than others into certain parts of social reality" (p. 9). It was indeed the case that, as Friese (2019) suggests, I was at one point inundated with hand-coding and hand-sorting piles of never-ending transcripts, pages on end of conflictual information which needed further clarification, more conversations, and follow-up correspondences with the participants. Hesse-Biber and Flowers (2019) hold that the iterative cycle of description allows the researcher to weave the findings in a back-and-forth analytical motion. Therefore, participants are allowed to "talk back" (Hesse-Biber & Flowers, 2019, p. 511) to the components which require further clarification. Between the first and second cycles of interviews, it was deemed necessary to get in touch with some of the participants by email to revisit ambiguities and refine the emerging categories. It was generally the case that a couple of correspondences with the participants concerned would suffice in providing a more accurate account.

3.6.1 The second cycle of interviews.

The second cycle of interviews was unstructured as the participants could discuss whatever aspect they wanted from the presenting emerging categories. Based on the information which was released by the participants themselves and based on the emerging categories, an unpublished paper (Appendix D) was written with the initial findings and sent to the participants in a document by electronic mail, to read before the interview; this procedure aimed to achieve more clarity on the new findings. According to Bryant (2017), the researcher has the opportunity to "be completely frank about the methodological development by using her insight and theoretical sensitivity in the analysis stages, and this would provide a basis of comparison, hopefully providing commonalities and patterns resulting in a more focused outcome" (p.171). My observational skills were crucial in the interviewing process as they could facilitate picking up on the unsaid, shifting the immediate topic in considering its varied aspects and reconsidering the emerging theory. It was indeed opportune to negotiate how far the participants wanted me to share my observations during the interviews. At other times the thought behind the observation needed to develop, and this is where memo writing came into play.

3.7 Memo-writing – assisting the process of transitioning between interviews.

The CGT method also entails making comparisons across interviews through memo writing. Theories can be brought in for comparison with categories emerging from the transcripts. According to Charmaz (2014), memos can also support the researcher to distinguish between major to minor categories and make sense of how they relate to each other. Notes are also jotted down about similarities and differences between participants' responses to

the same interview questions; my reflexive take on their responses. The memo notes, in turn, facilitated the extrapolation aspect from the focused categories, which needed to be clarified or expanded in the discussion interviews following the first cycle of interviews. For instance, participants were so hesitant in answering the question on an existential metaphor that I had to think of ways to consider re-opening the discussion around what needed to be clarified. Bryant (2017, p. 197) holds that memo-writing is a "pivotal intermediate step in grounded theory between data collections and writing drafts of papers". Box 1 shows an example of these memos:

BOX 1 – On Metaphors

8.1.2017

How do I support myself in tolerating all these ambiguities? Participants' conversations are still clusters in my head and these clusters only allow for chaos. Rather I need to create paths leading to these different shades. There are gaps in the data collection around the use of metaphor. P1 described the use of metaphor as poems, or the infinite numbers of wrappers around a parcel. No mention of philosophers or their thinking. Maybe the concept needs to be broadened, maybe everything is a metaphor, like a colour that we put to our belief system and our own life experiences. Maybe P3 was right, does metaphor disguise the dream? Is this disguise anxiety-provoking? And why was P2 so insecure when she was presenting her very interesting take with how creative she is between theory and practice? Since there is no psychoanalytic language involved in existential therapy, can we say that a client's ways of how language is used in the therapy room is a metaphor in itself? It seems that in existential therapy both dreams and conversation are treated as products of the imagination but while a conversation has a linearity about it, dreams are more puzzling but the existential atmosphere assists in understanding individual experiences, making the client's language accessible to the therapist, and metaphor becomes their code.

The memo in Box 1 was written after four interviews took place. By the end of the entire interviewing process, I accumulated piles of memo notes which were sprawled over bits of paper, notebooks, my mobile phone, back pages of books, my diary and my Gmail box; an endless source of information, which at times also came to me by surprise, when I could not recall ever writing them.

3.8 The Stages of Coding.

Tweed and Charmaz (2012) describe the CGT process in Figure 1 as a pyramid where the raw data or the initial descriptive codes are the foundational base for the more focused codes. Each level of coding up in the pyramid denotes a higher and more sophisticated level of interpretation. Once there is a complete understanding of the focused code and category, it can then be framed into a theoretical concept. During the process of spiralling up the stages, there is a constant comparative method, where questions are raised on emerging concepts and where code and categories are constantly compared within and between each other. According to Tweed and Charmaz (2012, p.132),

> This comparative process entails looking for similarities, differences and nuances between all the elements of the analysis to generate a more abstract understanding of the material. Using this comparative method is a dynamic non-linear process, requiring the researcher to stay open to new insights within the analysis.

The positions of the researcher, the participants and what is being researched were clarified through a cyclical form of inquiry. The participants' responses both to the initial cycle of interview questions and the discussions in the form of an open-ended interview around the emergent categories (second cycle of interviews) were transcribed and analysed to better organise the new theoretical categories.

Box 2 shows an interview sample from the first cycle of interviews, including the initial coding (refer to Appendix E for other interview samples). In the initial coding stage, the researcher is encouraged to look through the transcribed data in *'words, lines, segments or incidents'* (Charmaz, 2014, p. 109), sticking very closely to the initial data by focusing on action, thus avoiding making theoretical leaps in the initial stages of the analytical process. I

chose to analyse the data in segments, mostly the size of one or two sentences, or in slightly bigger segments, particularly when participants took longer to make their point.

Initial coding and beginning attempts at focused coding were undertaken right from the start of the pilot stage. Charmaz (2014, p. 169) holds that as soon as the researcher transcribes the interviews, she "starts recording what she sees happening in the data" by developing qualitative codes. Charmaz (2014) holds that coding line by line may work particularly well as this process helps the researcher to refocus in later interviews. Line-by-line coding will, in turn, facilitate an ongoing comparison of incoming data where the researcher is in a better position to "distinguish between major and minor categories...thus beginning to place them within a theoretical framework" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 182). The process of coding right after each interview gave me new ideas of what could be explored further. If understanding about specific codes was incomplete, I could go to the next participant and seek further clarification.

The more interviews were transcribed, the more possible it was to proceed to more focused codes. Throughout the coding process, larger segments of data were analysed and conceptualised. Thus, potential theoretical directions were continuously evaluated. Charmaz (2014, p. 141) defines focused coding "as using initial codes that have more of a theoretical reach, direction, and centrality."

Box 2 – P10 – Interview 1	**On Existential Metaphor**
Openness to the client is ongoing **sameness, separateness, togetherness and uniqueness** **vigilance around cleverness** **vigilance around cleverness** **the threats of the Guru mentality** **facilitating metaphor through description** **the art of building a therapeutic alliance** **client's evolving appreciation of their dreams** **openness to the client is ongoing** **the bazaar of metaphors in the therapeutic space**	P10: Yeah, again, uh, I, I wouldn't, I wouldn't necessarily dispute that. Uh, but I'd be wary of uhm, suggesting it in any, in any explicit way, you know. I- i- it seems to me that first of all there's more than enough to be going with without having to impose further abstract ideas onto what the client is bringing. I think also it's potentially dangerous uh, in terms of the relationship because once again, the therapist in, in bringing that element into it, is potentially saying to the client or the client hears it as I know more about your dream than you do. And I, I think that's... Not only is that arrogant, but I think, it's destructive to the whole enterprise. So a- again I don't want to come down and say oh, no, no you, you know there are..., these metaphors might not be there. They might be there for the therapist and it then depends on how, if at all, the therapist might want to offer them to the client. But I, but I think that's very much dependent upon where you are in the relationship with the client and whether it feels like it's not something that the client... If it is there, that the client might not arrive there for himself or herself without you bringing it in. You know, so my, I tend to try to uhm, try to stay as much as possible with the material that the client brings and, and work with that. And usually what I find is that there's more than enough to be getting on with.

Box 2 – Sample of one interview from the first cycle.

Box 3 shows a sample of an interview from the second cycle of interviews including the initial coding (refer to Appendix E for other interview samples).

Box 3 – P10 – Interview 2	**Difficulties with having a unifying factor**
tension among contemporary practitioners **different phenomenological influences in existential circles** **tension among contemporary practitioners** **reflections of past and future debates** **tension among contemporary practitioners** **differences of phenomenological influences in existential circles** **tension among contemporary practitioners** **relational dreamwork** **conflictual descriptions to the use of metaphor**	P10: Yes, I mean, look, I think… I think, again, if we… If we broaden it for a moment, I think you've tapped into something which is there in this whole enterprise of existential therapy. The… We, we don't have a a unifying figure, we've never had one. You know, some are more influenced by one philosopher as opposed to another, or one, one form of, ah, application as opposed to another, and, and we're all calling ourselves existential, but it…n the unifying aspects of it are very difficult to draw out, you know? and when what was it now, two years, two and a half years ago, there was this whole online thing taking place between a whole bunch of us, trying to… Just trying to come up with a definition of what existential therapy might be, we came up with something, but it's something that isn't ideal for any one of us. You know, it says something very broad, ah, but no one of us would fit entirely into that definition, because there are such important differences. Now, maybe if… Maybe that's the case in all models, but I don't think it's as explicit as it is in, this model, so I, I understand your dilemma to the extent of saying, what can I… What can I draw together from these interviews that, um… Well, I guess you could do things like, say, you know, I don't know if that's the case, but, for instance, you could… Let's imagine you could argue and say, ah, all of the 11… the way that relationship is understood or the very meaning of the term can vary quite significantly. I think that's the honest thing that you can say

Tweed and Charmaz (2012) hold that the above strategies for data collection are the most typical as “textual material has been the primary form of data, including transcripts, written documents and diaries” (p132). I have used NVIVO 12, a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) and integrated it into the coding process. I have avoided using a computer-generated theme. This procedure would have required the definition of a rule, for instance, relating to the word ‘metaphor’, whereby the software can perform semi-automatic coding. Instead, I chose to conduct the analysis myself. Figure 3 is a photo of a printed screenshot from NVIVO12 of how the focused coding was built into categories whilst doing the line-by-line coding. I did a sentence-by-sentence coding on a word document and then transferred the document on NVIVO 12, where I dragged the segments myself, where my memo writing informed me how I could organise the focused codes.

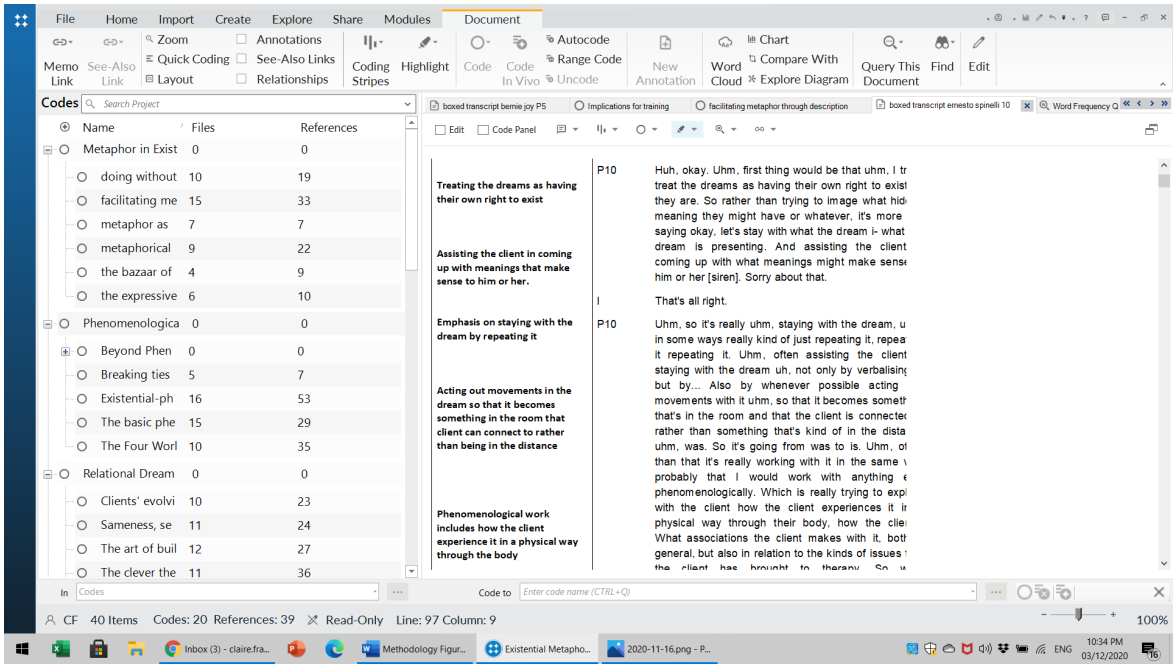


Figure 3 shows the emergence of the focused codes. The sample of the transcript is found on the right-hand side. On the left-hand side of the same screenshot, there is an indication of how the segments were transferred to the focused codes. The numbers in the bracket

indicate the number of times this code was discussed by the different research participants. The title of each focused code is marked with a ‘0’.

I not only used a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to complete qualitative data analysis, but it was also possible to obtain a visualised representation of which codes were the most significant. This procedure required deciding which initial codes made the most analytical sense that would enable me to proceed with the theoretical codes. Belgrave and Seide (2019) argue that computer packages for data analysis can be tremendously helpful in manipulating large amounts of data. Still, the researcher needs to be careful how to make use of these tools, in not losing the focus on what the data is revealing and treat it as a mere discussion of codes. The researcher is reminded that codes are part of a bigger picture, which also includes memo writing and the process of theoretical sampling. Moreover, ‘it is still the researcher who will have the ideas and the gifts to do exceptional research’ (Frieze, 2019, p.285).

Figure 4 is the photo of a printed screenshot from NVIVO12 showing a steady build-up of focused codes and the process of organising them under the more related theoretical codes.

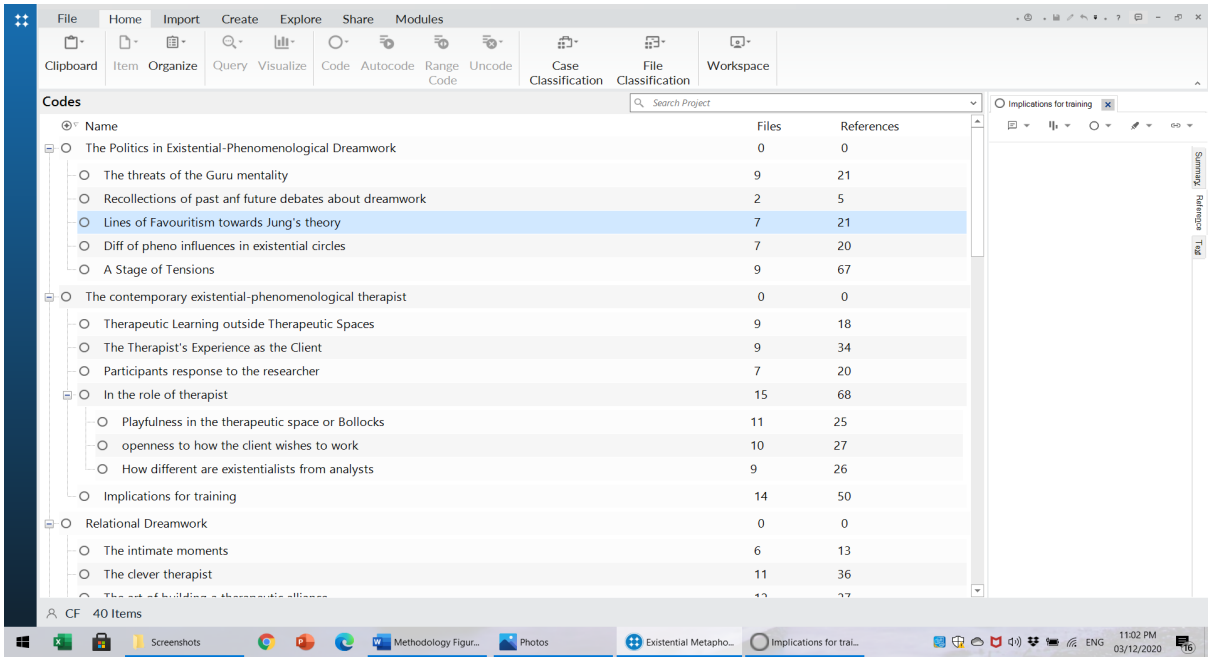


Figure 4 – The formation of theoretical codes

Theoretical coding was the final stage of the analytical process where the aim was to integrate the data, making it coherent and understandable. It also involved attending to other emergent codes and, at times, seemingly discordant theoretical codes. Theoretical codes lend form to the focused codes, giving them coherence, moving the analytical stage of research to a more theoretical structure (Charmaz, 2006). This, however, does not mean that the theoretical codes become a forced framework of the theory. Rather, it is an opportunity for the researcher to interrogate whether the theoretical codes interpret all the data (Charmaz, 2006).

3.9 Ethics.

All participants were informed that the study conforms to the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society (2009) and Middlesex University (2014). Participation in this study was voluntary. Once the participants responded to the advert and read the participation information sheet, consent forms were then distributed, signed and collected. Adequate records of when, how and from whom consent was obtained have been kept for the entire duration of the study.

The participants were also informed about their right to withdraw at any time during the study. In the case of a withdrawal request, the data extrapolated during both interviews would have been destroyed. When it came to the participants' contact details and other personal information, the Data Protection Act (2018) was adhered to. Both the files and the data were stored in a manner that avoids inadvertent disclosure. Anonymity, confidentiality and the right to privacy were respected not only because of the participants but also their clients. Apart from the fact that my research interest was more in the therapists' voices when it came to dreamwork, there was no way I could have accessed the participants' clients as this group of therapists had clients who have been attending sessions for years. The participants explicitly stated that they were not keen on sharing specific dreams of clients lest they are recognised from their dreams. During the very few instances where the participants shared client work, they took the responsibility of anonymising the clients concerned. I, in turn, also took the responsibility of anonymising third party data of people, places and events. When it came to their clients, the participants tied the researcher with the same rights of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were assured that this arrangement would remain in place unless they decided to withdraw their consent of information shared about specific clients. In such cases, the information provided would

have been completely deleted from the transcript. Any published material in journals or material which is held at the New School for Psychotherapy and Counselling (NSPC) or Middlesex University will also be anonymised.

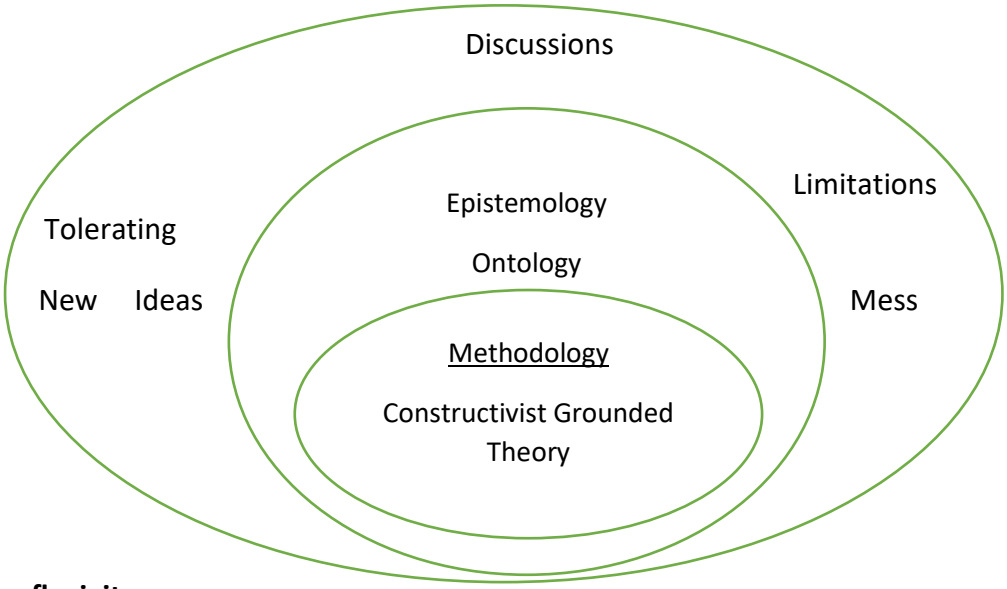
In the eventuality of potential risks of harm, the researcher would have considered alternative forms of action, given the research process. Therefore, participants were not only informed about their rights to withdraw, but they were also informed about their rights to complain and were handed over the contact details of NSPC administration personnel. Finally, the researcher kept in mind her obligations, to be honest and transparent in her claims, as to what is sole appropriate ownership or not when it comes to the research itself and other published writings. Therefore, contributions from participants, as well as the collaborative support of both the primary and secondary supervisor and the training provided by the New School for Psychotherapy and Counselling in collaboration with Middlesex University, were acknowledged. The participants will also have access to the findings of the study after completion of the final viva, after which all contact details will be destroyed.

3.10 – Dealing with the complexity of the research process.

The CGT process, as indicated in Figure 1, was a messy one. Figure 5 is a diagram that I have created to suggest that Tweed and Charmaz's (2012) flow chart on the CGT process only encompassed the smaller circle of the entire process. Once I was decided on the use of CGT as my preferred methodology and the interviews that were going to be taking place, I also realised that the coding process required several weeks to organise into the more theoretical codes from which a coherent discussion could be developed. The differences in the participants' views could not be easily reconciled. I had reasons to believe that out of

curiosity, some of my participants got in touch with each other about the topic in question. Putting in writing their initial reactions in a paper format for the second cycle of interviews and having an open-ended discussion, enabled the participants to have access to the same information. In the end, the objective of the task was reached. There was more space for opening the conversation on many different levels, which were unexpected or unassumed.

Figure 5 – Cyclical Relations in this research.



3.11 Interweaving reflexivity.

Charmaz (2014) defines reflexivity as the process of examining how the researcher influenced her inquiry. This process would not only include the researcher's interests, positions and assumptions, but it also includes how the researcher "relates to the research participants and represents them in written reports" (p. 344). Finlay (2012) also seems to support the idea that reflexivity can be used to expose the 'researcher's relational and ethical dilemmas which tend to permeate the entire research process' (p.317). She presents three leading reflexive questions which I found very relevant during my research process. In addition, Finlay (2012) offers five lenses to the researcher to facilitate an expansive view of

these three reflexive questions. In the first question, Finlay (2012, p. 317) encourages the researcher to ask, “What am I trying to do?”. This question was a crucial one at the beginning of my research process. Despite having a tentative guideline of interview questions, I felt it was not going in the direction of exploring

the existential aspect of metaphor in existential-phenomenological dreamwork. I had my fantasies about the answers I wished to hear, and I experienced deep angst in relinquishing these expectations. Somehow, I had this assumption that participants were applying the work of existential philosophers in dreamwork, when considering how deeply metaphorical the work of Sartre (2003), Nietzsche (1969) and Kierkegaard (1983) are, to mention just a few. Eventually, I came to realise that the more relational I became with the research participants, the more authentic was the interviewing process, as it was not about the knowledge or the training that they carried; rather, it was more about how much these participants had worked on themselves, bringing themselves in the room, rather than a toolbox or a specific discipline of therapeutic skills.

“Why am I carrying out the interview in this way?” is Finlay’s (2012, p. 317) next question. The relational aspect of the interviewing process was indeed only one of the five reflexive lenses. Finlay (2012) also suggests the interplay of two other lenses, which include ethical and embodied reflexivity. It was very important to meet the participants on their territory, which do not solely refer to their physical space. Indeed, it was sometimes the case that these participants carried their physical space wherever they went. The therapy room could very quickly become redundant as it was their ethical framework that provided the field for fluid exploration of their clients’ dreams. I aspired to be not only a fluid researcher, but I also wished to be open to this fluidity in my therapeutic practice and in life in general.

"How is my approach affecting the research?" (Finlay, 2012, p. 317). Cornish, Gillespie and Zittoun (2014) hold that the interpretation that we produce is partly a function of our methodological disposition. Similarly, for Finlay (2012), the methodological and epistemological positioning provides the strategic lens for the research to achieve transparency. The situational and socio-cultural elements are the fifth important lens to achieving clarity in the research findings. What Finlay (2012) and Cornish et al. (2014) are therefore suggesting is that the researcher might not only have assumptions about the research itself but the world at large. Different cultural backgrounds, ex-pats who have been living in the country of the research inquiry for many years, political undertones and critical historical events were also undeniably infused in the research findings. As Shaw (2010) rightly puts it, when the researcher engages in reflexivity, there is a proactive exploration of oneself in the research inquiry. Moreover, the researcher "can enter into a dialogue with participants and use each participant's presentation of self to help revise her fore-understanding and come to make sense of the phenomenon anew" (p.235).

3.12 Concluding Words.

Figure 6 shows an NVIVO generated pie chart demonstrating the five theoretical codes which will be presented in detail in the analysis chapter (Chapter 4). The colour-coding indicates the importance the theoretical code has had in the research process, with *'the contemporary existential-phenomenological therapist'* being the more popular code and the *'the metaphor in existential-phenomenological dreamwork'* being the least popular. The subdivided space with white lines indicates the number of subcategories which will also be presented in Chapter 4.

Figure 6 – Theoretical Codes

1.The becoming of the therapist

2.Phenomenological inquiry of dreams

3.Relational dreamwork

4.The politics in dreamwork

5. Metaphor in dreamwork

I conclude this chapter with Watzlawick et al. (2011) words on the practical perspective of change. They state that "things may be as "different as day and night" and the change from the one to the other appear to be extreme and ultimate, and yet, paradoxically, in the wider context (within the group in the mathematical sense) nothing may have changed at all" (p. 20). According to Watzlawick et al. (2011), one of the fallacies of change is when we think that we have to move in between opposites, make a comparison or create a contrast. I am aware that this is a humble project interviewing eleven participants who are keen on working with dreams. My intention is not to re-invent the wheel but to create a discussion about what has been going on in the field of existential-phenomenological dreamwork. In the process of gathering all these reflections to make use of them when integrating the theoretical codes to my memo notes in the discussion chapter (Chapter 5), I had not realised how much energy and time I had invested in this whole process. It was challenging to take the information gathered from the first cycle to a deeper level in the second cycle. The analysis chapter begins with a cumulative presentation of the final emergent categories mapped out and organised under the specific theoretical categories.

Chapter 4

Analysis Chapter

4. Introduction.

This chapter aims to organise and bring together the meaningful categories elicited from the participant interviews. The main research question is 'how do existential-phenomenological therapists work with dreams?' The categories were elicited through the process of manual coding, organising the codes from merely being emergent, to having the researcher focus on those codes which appear interesting enough to develop them into theoretical codes. The emergent focused, and theoretical coding procedures have been based on Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory methodology. The categories are presented in a manner that indicates a cumulative and progressive array of participants' knowledge, organised in five theoretical codes (TC):

TC 1 - The becoming of the existential-phenomenological therapist,
TC 2 – The phenomenological inquiry of dreams,
TC 3 - Relational dreamwork,
TC 4 - The politics in dreamwork,
TC 5 - Metaphor in dreamwork.

Charmaz (2014) holds that the purpose of theoretical codes is to integrate the data, lending it form. This procedure enables the researcher to present an analytic and coherent narrative, specifying relationships between categories and making linkages between codes that appear to be more repetitive. Charmaz (2014, p.151) argues that "the tension in theoretical coding lies precisely between emergence and application", which are yet to be resolved. However, there are such degrees of fluid uncertainty and contradictions in the participants' narratives that the analysis can only present a tentative account of these theoretical concepts. An effort has been made to avoid imposing a forced frame on these codes. My assumptions have been shaken repeatedly as the data revealed new

perspectives. Nevertheless, it was too rich to capture it all, but the development of an implicit theoretical sensitivity assisted me in being selective around which emerging patterns I wanted to focus on.

I completed a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) using NVIVO software, providing the option for sorting, managing and analysing qualitative data. I tried navigating this tool to see whether it was going to be helpful to produce a visual representation of the findings, but I felt that the computer-generated charts of analysis such as the Word Frequency Chart in Figure 7 left the analysis relatively dry and empty of description. The words 'know', 'think', and 'dream' were predominant in their use in participant conversations. Other predominant words included a suggestive discussion around working differently with dreamwork, the experience of the therapist, meaning making and interpretation. A mere plot of 125 words was not going to encompass the richness and fullness of the findings. I wanted to carry out the analysis myself, where I was keen to get stuck in and immerse myself in the complexities of the data. Indeed, if the tool were unhampered by me, it would present a clean and tidy organisation of data I wanted to capture the complexity and the messiness whilst I was going through the coding process of the data.

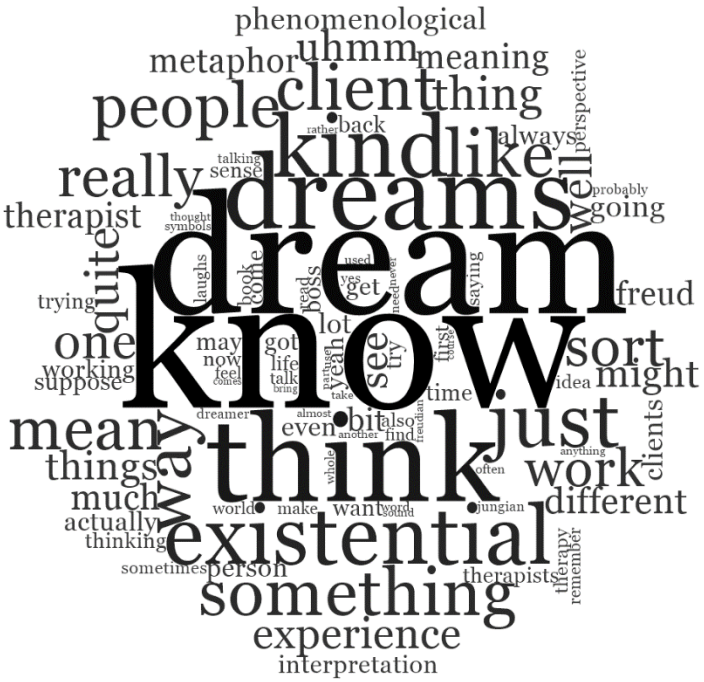


Figure 7 – Word Frequency Cloud generated with NVIVO 12

I used the 'concept map' tool from NVIVO and built the charts manually for each theoretical code. This procedure also gave me the possibility to merge my thoughts and ideas in the process of organising the different concepts around each respective map. In the concluding section of this chapter, I attempt to bring all the different concept maps representing the five theoretical codes into one complete map, serving as a springboard to the discussion chapter.

4.1 Theoretical Code 1 - The Becoming of the existential-phenomenological practitioner.

Figure 8 -Theoretical code 1 in the concept map.

The experience of interviewing these participants was deep and enriching as they were keen to present their unique ways of being. They made no distinction between how they view themselves as persons and therapists; the two seemed interchangeable. The essence of their identity was described given their exposure to other psychotherapeutic modalities both in their roles as practitioners and in their experiences as clients. The participants also spoke about their process in developing their styles of working years after having had their training in existential-phenomenological therapy. Consequently, participants debated how far they identified themselves with the initiators of the existential-phenomenological movement. They also argued for lack of identification with their first years of training in

existential-phenomenological therapy, viewing practitioners in this field as so varied in their style of working that no one unifying figure defines an existential-phenomenological therapist. The participants gave value to their everyday experiences and described how their choice of activity such as gardening, dancing, painting, or yoga also informed their practice; experiences also informed their practice. These same mundane experiences facilitate the removal of demarcation lines in the participants' roles as therapists and as human beings. All eleven participants found no inhibition in being themselves with their clients. Of course, this is not suggestive of a lack of boundaries in their therapeutic work; rather, these practitioners found no inhibitions to be self-disclosing, giving space for an authentic therapeutic relationship to develop with their clients, allowing for fluidity and openness with the presenting phenomenon. The implication is that if dreamwork is an extension of these uninhibited experiences, then this suggests that we dream what we live and we are no longer preoccupied with unconscious material.

4.1.1 Being true and untrue to oneself.

The tension between being true and untrue to self and others was an important theme in the participants' ways of being with their clients. The uncovering of Being is one of Heidegger's (1962) extended descriptions of what it means to be 'authentic' throughout his writings in his book *Being and Time*. It seems to lend itself to defining the becoming of a practitioner, as having very much to do with being true to oneself. According to Heidegger (1962),

> "When the assertion has been expressed, the uncoveredness of the entity moves into the kind of Being of that which is ready-to-hand within-the-world. But now to the extent that in the uncoveredness, as an uncoveredness of something, a relationship to

> something present-at-hand persists, the uncoveredness (truth) becomes for its part, a relationship between things which are present-at-hand…a relationship that is present-at-hand itself"(p.267).

The Heideggerian sense of uncoveredness seems to resonate with this participant's (P4) reflection of how true and untrue she was to herself and the clients. This participant was losing a body function which could potentially pose a difficulty during therapy and its impact on the therapeutic relationship:

> Should I tell my clients I am wearing a hearing aid, and should I, you know, I felt I needed to confess, or if they found out they'd want their money back? Or I'd have to pretend I could understand when I couldn't because it was all of that... And once I thought, sod it, what am I on about, just relax. (P6)

The sense of uncovering becomes more varied when it comes to working with clients' dreams, as indicated by the two participants below (P8, P2). P8 indicated that dancing around the therapy room was one potential possibility of working with a client, which challenges the idea of the therapist and the couch. Rather it is the therapist, the client and the dream:

> So, I do believe in having a secure frame, and that will be slightly different from one client to another. Like, I wouldn't dance around the room with any other client except that client. I will also paint with clients. So quite often, we'll paint together. So, it's quite free flowing, but they kind of dictate the language. So, I never kind of would say, would you like to paint? I have another client where he would ask for the dog to be there for the first few minutes, and actually after some minutes my dog used to get up and leave. (P8)

> I try and work very creatively with people. If you do pictures and have a nice photo, bring it in as it might offer a different way of getting into your life rather than the worn-out things that we keep telling ourselves that are our narratives. So that's how I invite them to think that the dream is an opportunity. (P2)

There seems to be no one prescriptive way of working with existential-phenomenological dreamwork. Rather than a method, it is more about staying with the client's phenomenon and be open to how the client wishes to approach therapy, and more specifically, the meaning clients make of their dreams. Such resources as mentioned by the participants when working with dreams in an existential-phenomenological way might include a painting that is hanging in the therapy room, an unfinished tapestry left on the table or a request to have the therapist's dog in the room. Requests oftentimes also included removing chairs and tables to make the therapeutic space available for the client to move around:

> There is a moment of a new, a sort of moment when a new truth emerges about what the meaning of this dream is in relation to our, sort of, historical understanding of, you know, dad, mum, knives, violence, you know. (P7)

> Often assisting the client in staying with the dream, not only by verbalising it but by acting out movements with it, so that it becomes something that's in the room and that the client is connected to it rather than something that's kind of in the distance. Other than that, it's working with it in the same way, probably that I would work with anything else phenomenologically. (P10)

What the therapists (P7, P10) in the above quotes are suggesting is that dreamwork builds on the description which is shared in the room and moves forward where new meanings of the same dream are generated over time.

4.1.2 Openness to the client's phenomenon is ongoing.

Differently from the classic analytical way of working, there are no hidden meanings in dreams within the existential-phenomenological way. Thus they carry the potential of discovering oneself, an unpacking of who one is. P6 describes how the dream, once written on paper, is dead but being spontaneous around the dream will invite new interpretations, giving it a new value in the therapeutic process:

> So, if they dream about a haircutter, you know, a barber they... they don't immediately say I suppose this must be a symbol for you. The most useful thing I can say is that you didn't dream about me, you dreamt about the hairdresser. Moreover, I mean, maybe after a bit of talking about it for a quarter of an hour, then they might find certain sort of things in common between the hairdresser and me and a common way that they relate to both of us. If you don't, first of all, get into the actual sort of concreteness of it then you are, doing violence to the dream; you're wasting its riches. (P6)

The therapist in the above quote (P6) describes how symbolic material is not interpreted by the therapist to be something else than what it is not. The barber remains the barber in the dream. At no point is it suggested that the barber is none other than P6. Rather, it becomes crucial for both the client and the therapist to engage with the symbolism of this dream and make meaning of what is being represented.

Another therapist (P10) describes dreams as warning signals, where the sleeping hours take on an informative role, to what seems to be missed or dismissed in the waking hours. Moreover, there seems to be the understanding that when the dream is brought into the therapy room, it is already in an altered state as it does not belong to the sleeping hours anymore. The therapeutic objective, therefore, becomes even more phenomenological in staying with the client's telling of the dream:

> Dreams are the kind of opportunities we give ourselves. Quite often, the dreams that people bring to therapy have much to say about the issues that have brought them to therapy in the first place. And it seems to me that those dreams are because they are related to those issues, and they're not only about considering possibilities. I think they're almost like warnings that we give to ourselves, saying if you continue in this way, this will happen. There might be a difference between the dreams we have in everyday life and the dream we have when we're engaged in therapy. (P10)

Similarly, the two participants (P6, P10) suggest that once the dream is shared in the waking

hours, it takes a life of its own, and the dream is no longer the same one. The waking hours give it a new perspective; talking about it in therapy also gives the dream a new meaning:

> So, it's more a kind of co-discovery rather than the client's discovery through the therapist's wise help and so forth, you know? It's like the therapist is usually a couple of steps ahead, and I think when you're doing good existential work, you're not doing those steps ahead, you're as close as you can be to where the client is that brings out a kind of excitement and so forth. For me, working with dreams very early on in therapy is a very different experience to working with dreams once some deeper relationship has been established. (P10)

The therapist enables a comfortable ambience for the client to feel safe and gives the client a sense of liberation from any assumptions made about the dream. This openness, in turn, ameliorates the position between the therapist and the client in the process of building a strong therapeutic relationship, whereby the entire process of looking at the client's dreams becomes a playful venture.

4.1.3 Playfulness in the therapeutic space – or is it just 'Bollocks'?

During the first cycle of interviews, participants were rather playful around the topic of dreams. I was not sure whether dreams were an aspect of therapy that alleviated the conversations or whether it reflected the anxiety of practitioners around an area in the existential-phenomenological field which is seldom spoken about. However, I felt that I was made to feel at ease, just as if I were a client whom the participants had met for the first time. The initiating conversations, On the other hand, I welcomed an attempt of relief from this angst, as this was always initiated by the participants. I was offered cups of tea, digestive biscuits, a walk around the village, or a visit to the odd village shop of trinkets. I was also handed books, journal articles or papers to browse through, garden views to look at, and had enough time to enjoy several therapeutic spaces which were unique and particular to the participants' style of living. There were moments in the interviews that I

laughed along with the participants. It did seem that laughter had a liberating and creative capacity:

> I can get so carried away in enjoying myself! I give myself a lot of leeways. Spontaneity feels more real. I kind of think as a proper existential therapist. LAUGHS. Probably like the sound of it, that's how I operate. (LAUGHS). Just take the pressure off. If it's spontaneous, if it feels real, then go with it. I have a lot of fun with clients, you know it's not all grim. (P4)

> I was always against interpreting, you know. Ah, this refers to early trauma with your mother whom you desired to sleep with, but your desire to sleep with her was repressed for many years, despite the attention of your jealous father, who wanted to take your mother away from you, oh bollocks! Bollocks to that! (LAUGHS). It is a space of playful reflection of the therapist and the client feeling vulnerable with each other. (P7*)*

Two of the participants (P4, P7) presented a playful irreverence in the process of creating new paths in the telling of the dream. Laughter seemed to give participants spontaneity to their work with their clients, which was less interpretative and more relational. This laughter gradually revealed to me that whilst writing my memo notes following the interviews, I could not refrain from idealising this group of participants. I found their spontaneous way of being pulling me in. The laughter was contagious, and even more so, I was impressed by their capacity to be creative in the therapy sessions. I write the following in my memo notes: *These participants had worked extremely hard for themselves and were now living life to the full, as well as being witnesses to a life worth living, sharing it by being of service to others within a therapeutic framework.* Two of the participants (P5, P3) seemed to be well able to live with their contradictions:

> We're also strong. We're vulnerable. We're weak. We're good. We're bad. We're, yeah, insensitive. We're anxious because we're living toward death. To begin with, I thought I'd be really special, really special and unique, yeah, and I found I am not. My attitude is almost anti-therapy. You come to me as my client, a broken reed, but my belief is that you do not need me. It's not about fixing things, you can work through the issues. (P5)

> I have as many personalities as I have friends. You know, because you're different. How I am in relation to my child, or how I am in relation to my friend, or to a student. We're always in process. The idea of a fixed self just has no meaning. When I first started training, and someone said self, what's that? Where do you keep it? In your big toe? You know, I didn't realise what they were questioning, because I just thought, well, of course, I'm me! It's obvious! (P3)

The above quotes from the two participants (P5, P3) are very powerful, and they will become a point of discussion and developed further in Chapter 5. How can we as therapists develop a practice from these contradictions? It seems that these therapists are true to the need to shift rather than having a fixed position. Does this suggest that existential-phenomenological therapists are trying to be both truthful and humane in their conversations with their clients? Do the contradictions also suggest that sitting comfortably in the anxieties of life's uncertainties makes the therapeutic space safer for clients to explore their limitations? And how do P5's vulnerability and P3's many personalities link to other participants ideas of laughter and playfulness in dreamwork?

4.1.4 The impact of Psychoanalysis.

Given the paradigmatic history of the influence of psychodynamic approaches on dreamwork, it is indeed a complex task to unearth and clarify the potential nature of an existential-phenomenological way of working with dreams. The influence of psychoanalysis in both the participants' professional and personal lives was unavoidable. Regardless of how far participants were under the influences of psychoanalytic ideology or not, the focus according to several participants (P4, P8, P10, P11) remains on the therapeutic relationship:

> Are we really that different? Er, that makes me laugh. I suppose I say, who do we think we are [laughs]? (P4)

> Nobody's saying anything differently, and I don't know whether that's good for your

> research or not or whatever, because basically, they stay with the phenomena of what the client brings, and if the client brings a dream, then that's honoured in the same way as a client bringing anything. (P8)

> Everybody within contemporary psychotherapy has been in some way or other influenced by psychoanalytic ideas of dreams and dream analysis. Even if the influence is one of rejection of the assumptions, you've still been influenced by it. So clearly there's a whole history of dream analysis that I think any therapist is bound to be enthused by it to some extent. (P10)

> Existential Therapy like many other approaches has a very clear focus on the relationship as well so to say that we are uniquely oriented? Well, nah. (P11)

Is the existential-phenomenological practice of working with dreams merely a change of vocabulary from the psychoanalytic framework? Or is it about therapists having the liberty of integrating whatever vocabulary from other schools of thought in their practice? This seeming importance given to psychoanalysis will be another point of discussion in Chapter 5. One participant referred to Jungian terminology as a metaphor in itself, which is there at the disposition of the therapist, simply as one way of talking about things:

> I think the existential therapist's saying, yeah, this might be useful, but it's not something that I have to relate to as truth. It's just another metaphor that we're using. So, you know, we might use metaphorical language of mother complex or animus, anima, and so forth, but not treat them as though they were in themselves, kind of, genuine, you know, entities or processes, they're just ways of talking about things. (P10)

Despite the conundrums of how far existential-phenomenological therapists have as their root a psychoanalytic orientation, this group of participants still developed a fluid and versatile way of working with dreams.

4.1.5 The therapist at university.

> I do not actually remember any training at all on the course. I think it is really overlooked because it is still a phenomenon of someone's existence. It might not be lived in the same way, but it is still lived, and it is still experienced, and it is still important and dramatic. So, for me I thought it was very poor. I can't remember anything particularly insightful other than that which was written in the 1930s or 1950s I think it's ridiculous. (P2)

> We had quite a good overview of dreams, from many different perspectives, where we could try, try interpreting dreams or describing dreams. I think a lot of new practitioners, come with the idea that you must work in a certain way with a dream. You either work existentially, or you work psychoanalytically, but there's a procedure. As long as you understand the frame and the boundaries and the basics, you know, be freer. I think people get too hung up, especially in the early days, about theory, you know, and which philosopher said which, and what is. (P9)

These different experiences as shown in the above quotes may suggest that when these participants were training, the aspect of existential-phenomenological dreamwork was still evolving. The training had to include the psychoanalytic interpretation of dreams so that students could distinguish between working with dreams using a technique and working with dreams phenomenologically. Some participants (P6, P3, P1) related how when their training institution was initially set up, it was difficult to keep the study unit on dreamwork consistently available to students as there scarcely were therapists keen to teach dreamwork:

> The advanced diploma in existential-phenomenological therapy suddenly made the word ADEPT. It was rather nice that it was called ADEPT…This year of the ADEPT, there was supposed to be one session in the whole term in which they studied the Freudian approach to dreams. However, right at the beginning of the term, the class announced unanimously that they refused to have such a class. They would not have one because this was not relevant. (P6)

> When I was teaching at Regent's College, we had a whole term on dreams. Moreover, the students loved that course. It's both experiential, with their own dreams. I can remember students saying, oh, I never know what to do, I get nervous when someone brings a dream. If you don't get taught it, then the likelihood of

> picking up on it is much less, I suppose. We used to look at other approaches, not just Boss. (P3)

> One reason that dreamwork might not be put on the training course is because there isn't space to put it in or the particular person delivering the course on the ground isn't up to speed on it. I mean in the New School skills programme there is a session on dreams which I talk about when I do it. (P1)

Despite the tension around how dreamwork should be taught, what seems to be prevalent is that this training challenged how the therapeutic intervention is perceived. One participant (P2) described how the course challenged her beliefs on how she evolved as a therapist, becoming more authentic and integrated in the way she related to her clients:

> So for me, it was about not just understanding it in an intellectual way I had to become it and see it in my life. See the truth of it. I had to believe it. Bit like a religion I guess so because I first trained as a CBT therapist, REBT, CBT with Windy Dryden and I had to walk away from it because I couldn't, I couldn't, it didn't fit and that's what I loved about existential I think it's about authenticity and integrity and I knew that it fit instinctively, but I didn't understand why. (P2)

Another participant's (P11) approach was a more pragmatic one, arguing that even though there may not be one prescriptive way with existential-phenomenological dreamwork, it still follows a structure:

> I really can become quite angry with some existential-phenomenologist therapists when they really say, I don't have structure, I'm really following the client. I think wow, come on, know yourself when someone says that it's for me a sign of not having enough self-reflection. It's like they're not aware of themselves. (P11)

4.1.6 The influence of life experiences.

The conversations become more playful when participants shared their own experiences as clients. They all showed an openness to taking their dreams to differently-oriented therapists:

> I go to a therapist of a spiritual disposition, so he did a lot of this work with me, so I have learnt from practical experience. So I say probably 70% of what I know, if not more, is learnt from experience. I do not think I have created anything original at all, but I say that I have learnt from experience from other people mainly. I think everybody should try this work on themselves first. (P2)

> It would have to be my experience of working with dreams when I had been a client, and all my experience in psychoanalysis as a client was on the couch. The way I work with dreams is so informed by my experience as a client. The vast majority of that experience was done way before I even thought of becoming a therapist. I came to doing therapy with a particular way of thinking about dreams. (P1)

The need to develop other enriching life skills, specific or otherwise leisurely tasks, was as important as personal therapy itself. Participants immersed themselves in whatever they took a fancy to, which was not necessarily directly related to gaining any specific psychotherapeutic skills but rather enriched them in their authentic ways of being. Buddhism, yoga, gardening, watching films and reading books, writing papers or articles on existential themes, and anything else they could get their hands on, improved their ability to work with ambiguous material such as dreams:

> You learn how to be attuned to your body outside therapeutic learning such as gardening. Buddhism also cultivates the ability to be patient, wait, be observant and see what emerges. (P9)

> I've always been a dancer, everything is very emotional, visual, ah, more than words, I'm never that bothered about or ever have been. (P4)

It was also fascinating to observe the therapists' willingness to be psychologically challenged by reading or watching ambiguous or absurd material:

> Read all you can, read good writers, read great books, watch great films. You know, Woody Allen is as inspiring as Heidegger and Merleau Ponty. (P7)

It was indeed a challenge describing the becoming of a therapist as this somehow argues for the confusion I felt in my initial attempts to organise these findings. How the participants see themselves in relation to psychoanalysis is a point of discussion for the next chapter. What it means to be authentic and how a therapist deals with relationships in the process of becoming will be elaborated further in the next theoretical codes. Working with uncertainty in a client's life and living a life of uncertainty is also a point of discussion for the next chapter. Before dealing with the uncertainties on the therapeutic work involving dreams, the following theoretical code describes the process of iterative description when working through dreams.

4.2 Theoretical Code 2 - The phenomenological inquiry of dreams.

One basic premise of existential-phenomenological dreamwork is to facilitate openness in description (Deurzen and Adams, 2011), allowing the client to make multiple interpretations of one or more dreams across different moments in therapy. The process of iterative description is referred to as a phenomenological exploration of what the client brings. Exploring in-depth the client's narratives, opening a discussion which not only challenges assumptions and beliefs, but such therapeutic encounters also bring to the client's awareness issues that would have appeared in dreams and require a more in-depth exploration in the waking hours. Participants present very creative and dynamic perspectives on how to go about working with existential-phenomenological dreamwork. Their ways of working with dreams support the idea that existential-phenomenological dreamwork is not a method or an approach but rather a school of thought which encourages the therapist to integrate freedom of expression in the way the therapist

practices dreamwork. This process is not necessarily divested of interpretation and gives clients ample space to make their interpretations.

Figure 9 -Building theoretical code 2 in the concept map.

4.2.1 – Treating the dream as any other mundane experience.

> I wouldn't particularly treat the dream in any different way than I would treat any other story that they're telling me about… Because it is the same kind of thing, something that happened during the week. It just happened to be a dream rather than a reported conversation, which may or may not have happened anyway, some of it did, with all the other bits put on top. So, I would treat the dream in much the same way as I treat anything else they say. Tell me all about it, you know, what, I'll ask them what came up for them, why were they telling me, what questions come up in each bit, what the various bits remind them of or whether they ever had this dream before or this kind of thing... (P1)

The above participant's (P1) interpretation of what goes on with dreamwork complements the participant's (P3) suggestion below, that the process of exploring the dream phenomenologically, reduces the possibility of psychoanalytic interpretation. Objects in the dream do not represent repressed material, rather the object is represented as itself:

> Phenomenology is about staying with what appears by opening it up exploring it more, not replacing it with something else, like a trite interpretation as soon as you see something that looks slightly phallic and then it becomes a penis. Or a handbag becomes a vagina, those kinds of interpretations I would not make, depending on their exploration, it may emerge, that there is something in relation to their sexuality about what occurred in the dream. We won't know that for quite a long time, so it's about staying with what is rather than replacing it with a symbol. (P3)

Dreams open up alternative possibilities for people to make sense of their lives. Descriptions of which go farther than the therapist's sense of the client. Meaning-making evolves through these descriptions, opening up possibilities for the client to view life events differently:

> So, I do not start from the position of what's the meaning of this? I just try not to as I think that would narrow it down too much, it is really described, describe, describe, explore, explore, try and just sort of open up to the experience and then gradually it will start to emerge, the meaning it has for the dreamer. (P3)

> I see dreams as predominantly ways of allowing ourselves to challenge fixed positions that… we adopt, in our waking life. So quite often dreams offer us the ability to explore alternate possibilities. It's like they all hold out another vision of our lives and say look, here it is, what do you think of it? (P10)

There also seems to be a strong willingness of both participants (P3, P10) to remain with what the client brings irrespective of whether the client's experience is coming from the sleeping or waking hours. Moreover, the therapist's knowledge or experience is not brought directly into the therapeutic space; it is the interaction between the therapist and the client that bring about an interpretation of the dream:

> Well, I suppose my work with the tension would be to try to resist any thoughts I might have about what I thought it really meant. It is almost inevitable that I would have some thoughts that they might say that I had this dream and I do not have the foggiest what it is about, and I say well I know what it is about. It's kind of blindingly obvious to me. That I'd have to try and sit on it and say, 'well tell me what's that bit like? and what that's a bit like?'. I try to bracket that, and I try to sit on it because I am pretty sure it wouldn't really matter much if I told them, it kind of would be interesting, but it wouldn't mean anything because at that point I would be telling them something interesting that I'd thought rather than that they'd discover for

> themselves. (P1)
>
> I mean lots of dreams might have elements in them that would suggest something to do with say, with death or dying. But it seems to me entirely inappropriate to impose a position on that in terms of saying, oh, well there's kind of death anxiety here or whatever. That seems completely remote to me. So, for me the existential theory is for the therapist, it's not for the client. More importantly, it's the therapist giving expression to that theory through the way that he/she interacts with the client. (P10)

I was curious to know how these therapists go about opening the discussion around dreamwork. From my training, I was made aware of the importance of asking questions that would specifically describe in detail parts of the dream. Furthermore, I was also exposed to the idea of exploring the dream through the four worlds, not only in my training but also in my own personal therapy. Considering their years of experience, I was curious to know whether participants used any of the more familiar techniques or whether they developed new ideas. I also wondered whether they worked differently after many years of practice. This is discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 Capturing the dream.

The first important task mentioned by the participants seems to support the idea of assisting the client in remembering the dream. Waking up naturally and keeping the same position in bed is more helpful in remembering the dream than waking up with a radio alarm. Keeping a notebook and a pencil beside the bed is encouraged, so the dream is recorded in the first morning hours:

> The best thing is to wake up without an alarm of any sort especially a radio alarm, the radio goes on and immediately the words just blast through and push the dreams out the other side. So, the best thing is to wake up naturally and as you wake up try not to wake up fully, try to stay half awake and stay lying in exactly the same position – don't move, stay lying and stay half-awake and see what fills your mind. See what comes in and try to go through it a few times and then wake up and write it down and then get on with the rest of the day. And if it's written down, whatever

> form whatever nonsense is written down, get on with the rest of the day and then you can come back to it. (P1)

Being physically disposed to remembering the dream seemed to partly resolve the importance of capturing the dream for the client to work through it. The participants below (P6) believe that the dream itself would have already altered once the client wakes up. There also seems to be the belief that the dream itself would have already changed its state in the waking hours. The process of writing down the dream was considered as a procedure that kills all the efforts in re-telling it spontaneously:

> You know, you may remember more details if you've written them down, but it's dead. You know, if you've really got something that's moved you or struck you about your dream and you just tell me, it will be. Tell me as you feel it, it'll be much easier for me to take it in and respond to it. So that's the phenomenology. (P6)

Once the dream is recalled, there is an iterative cycle of questions to get as much of a clear description of the dream as is possible. This is followed by a second stage whereby the therapist is more participative in the co-construction of all the possible meanings around the dream. The final stage might involve an interpretation made by the client of what the dream may be suggesting, opening the possibility of several other potential interpretations, every time the dream is revisited. The dream is viewed as compacted with so much information that the work needs to be done in stages, giving all the details of the given information the same level of importance:

> It is the simplified version of what Boss defines as, a tripartite question which is the 'where', 'what' and 'how'. So where is the dreamer in the dream? What do they encounter? How do they experience it? And to remain phenomenological, you stay with what is. What is described? How is it experienced? Where are they? What is their mood? How do they respond to what they encounter? (P3)

> The first stage is very much let the client work on their own, explore what is most important. In the second stage, we co-construct a dream to some extent, or we start to work with it together. It's like an interaction. Going on the third stage, we can

> really speak about working with it. Personally, I work with a lot of metaphors in my therapies. (P11)

It was interesting to observe that the three-stage model of working with dreams was modified to the participants preferred ways of working with dreams. Whilst the therapist in the above quote (P3) used the tripartite questions of the 'where', the 'what' and the 'how' in the process of encouraging the client to give more description, the other therapist (P11) describes the three stages as a build-up to co-constructing the meaning of the dream, where the therapist and the client find ways of working with the dream together. Other modes which appeared to be less descriptive were viewed as less phenomenological. There were even apologies given for having developed one's style of working. The capitalisation in the conversation below may indicate that this participant may have felt somewhat ashamed for digressing from the descriptive element of the dream:

> There's a feeling of exposure in admitting to the existential community that, you know, Oh NO! YOU CAN'T CLOSE EYES [emphasis by the interviewee raised her voice] and YOU CAN'T DO THIS [raised voice] because you are shutting down people's lived experience! (P2)

Moreover, generalisations over similar dreams are avoided. There is never the assumption that a similar dream shared by different clients mean the same thing. I find this aspect of work very diverse from analytical therapies. Existential-phenomenological therapies do not seem to make these assumptions:

> I have two clients that bring in a lot of dreams - one is in his 50s, head of a business organisation; and the other one is a newly qualified therapist - are their dreams essentially different? You know you don't really know that one person's dream is not the same as another person's dream, we work very differently with both. (P8)

> There's the client that never brings a dream at all, I have clients who have never, ever brought a dream and I've been working with them for a long time. I've what I call one-off dreams which usually come at quite key points in time, so maybe at the beginning of therapy or when we're sort of getting to something quite profound and the client has a dream almost a week before the session or the night before the

> session, so there's something about dreams related to specific points in the therapy and the third, and I only have one client like this, who just brings dreams on a fairly regular basis, and I never, you know, say to clients bring your dreams. If they do bring a dream, I always work with it. (P9)

At times unhappiness was experienced, mainly when the therapist felt the need to take authority in the therapeutic relationship by being more suggestive of an interpretation – almost as if the more directive interventions disrespected their authentic selves and discredited their phenomenological stance in the therapeutic work. For instance, the participant (P7) seems to think that existential therapy does not rely on techniques as it is all about the therapist having the courage to be vulnerable with a client. The other participant's (P3) description of this unhappiness sounded like a confession for still being attracted to psychodynamic therapies or the peculiarities existing in other therapies:

> The challenge of working existentially is to avoid strategies or relying on techniques, allowing and showing courage with one's vulnerability. (P7)

> I don't want to stray away from being phenomenological, but when I read the work or hear colleagues talking about a more sort of symbolic interpretative way of looking at dreams, sometimes I say, Oh! am I missing out by being too phenomenological? So, I think I can't not have some of that in mind. (P3)

The existential-phenomenological style of working poses a dilemma as there is no prescriptive way, a method or an approach that an existential-phenomenological therapist must follow. This is not only reflected in the manner descriptions of dreams are encouraged, but there was also a huge debate in the use of the four existential dimensions, which are Deurzen and Adam's (2011) description of the personal, physical, social and spiritual world in dreamwork. This will be developed in the next section.

4.2.3 The four-worlds dilemma.

The four worlds namely *Umwelt* (physical world), *Mitwelt* (social-world), *Eigenwelt* (personal-world) and *Uberwelt* (spiritual world) (Deurzen, 2010) were referred to as existential mediatory themes which facilitate the process of highlighting the details of the dream, which remain significant even during the waking hours. There were feelings of approval among some of the participants that the four dimensions gave depth to the discussion of the client's lifeworld in relation to the occurring dreams. P2, P8 and P11's narratives are also congruent with the previous suggestions made in the way clients can actively engage with their dreams within the framework of the four worlds. Moreover, the four existential dimensions in dreamwork were described as facilitating a more conscious awareness, a new way of seeing the world:

> I do kind of think of it in terms of four dimensions. I sometimes even say to clients you're very heavy in this area and yes it all kind of merges in dreams. It's quite hard to be so distinct. (P2)

> You can't fit a dream into the other dimensions, but you fit the other dimensions into a dream, whereas if you have the dream dimension, how do you fit it in? I use a diagram that I've come up with for the dimensions, and we will just use them as a sort of way of checking in, helping them to, kind of, oh, yeah, that's more important to me, then, or, hmm, maybe I've not given much attention to that and maybe I don't want to, or maybe I do, but I can't see that adding more dimensions brings anything. (P8)

> As long as it's not like a rigid thing that you really box people in, that, of course, becomes a problem. So, I have one session for each of the different worlds. So, in that one session, we will focus on the highlights in your life at that moment or what highlights you would like to have, regardless of the particular world. (P11)

There were negative reactions as to why the four worlds should take such prominence in dreamwork. Participant P6 based his argument on the fact that Binswanger (1994) worked on many different worlds with his patients, and by the time Heidegger (1962) wrote 'Being and Time', he developed a different perspective about Being altogether. Participant P9, on

the other hand, finds no relevance in splitting the world for the client into these different elements:

> This really institutionalised existential therapy, and I don't like it. Binswanger, for a very short time in his career, used the three worlds. But he also spoke of many, many different worlds in the Ellen West case. He talked about the swamp world and the ethereal world and the grave world and the tomb world. Heidegger used to talk about the self-world, the selbstwelt with the mitwelt and the umwelt. And there was also a time in his lectures before Being and Time when he used to talk about the self-world, the with-world and the around-world. Freud used the umwelt and the mitwelt before Binswanger or Heidegger did, these are just ordinary German terms, but to solemnly, split somebody up into the three worlds and then to solemnly announce that there is a fourth world, this is absolute rubbish. (P6)

> It's a bit like an existential metaphor. I understand clients as being in the world, and the world is all those dimensions. You don't need to sort of split it into four. If you understand a client as being in the world, the world embodies all the different elements, including the dream world, I don't know what the value of then chopping down that world into different aspects is because somehow, you're going against the idea of being in the world which is all joined up. The hyphens in Heidegger means that we are all interconnected. I think it's our need to find structure and meaning on something that's beyond our understanding. (P9)

I developed some more creative ideas of how data could be interweaved. I attempted to be playful by suggesting the fifth dimension, referring to it as the *traumwelt* (dreamworld). Some of the participants argued against further division in the lifeworld dimensions. In the next chapter, I will discuss further how to think beyond the four existential dimensions:

> Why would it need a separate dimension, and I thought, the one positive thing in having a separate dimension was to draw the therapist's attention to dreams. But why dreams more than anything else?'(P8)

> Because you're saying something very deep, in my opinion, so there's more to the fifth rather than being the dreamworld itself. There's something deep almost as if it's also tied to death, to anxiety, Something almost very primitive, very basic. (P4)

The feedback which was given between the two cycles of interviews demonstrated how active the researcher has to be in a constructivist field of inquiry, by not only collaborating

with the participants but by also being suggestive and, I dare say, provocative in the way the researcher plays with the presenting knowledge. The sole purpose is, of course, to arrive at saturation of knowledge and understanding in the process of developing theory. Nevertheless, sharing tentative suggestions seemed to attract such authentic feedback that the specific areas in the field of dreamwork were explored rigorously, opening up other possible aspects for further discussion:

> There's still a stance, it's a stance of provoking openness and curiosity and so forth, but it's not so concerned with where's this going to take us, and so if you take that… If you take that stance, the need to, kind of, classify and to demarcate things, it's not going to disappear, for sure, but it becomes far less demanding and more flexible, there's flexibility there. (P10)

> It's just a way of thinking, and they're certainly not and never were intended to be, boxes to be ticked. So, there's some level of ignorance there, a level of ignorance, and prejudice in the proper sense. Like the idea of the traumwelt, the dream world is just an organising principle that we can use to think about the experience. (P1)

I realised what a great learning experience the iterative cycle of description proved to be. I needed to classify the coded interviews demarcating categories, but I also became very flexible in processing these narratives. From the relational point of view, the role of the existential-phenomenological therapist was to give the client every possibility to describe what stood out or what was of significance, investing not only in the clients' capabilities of meaning-making but also placing the therapeutic relationship (refer to category 4.3) as a central point of reference when working with dreams.

4.2.4 The unavoidable aspect of anxiety in dreamwork.

Existential themes were indeed part and parcel of the therapeutic work, whereby other important aspects were integrated into phenomenological dreamwork. For instance, the client's emotions or moods whilst having the dream or emotions experienced in the first few

waking hours were an important exploration. It also seemed easier to explore these emotions particularly if the therapeutic session took place in the morning hours. This understanding is also common among analytical therapies where dreams that occur the night before the therapeutic session are more significant than any other dream which occurs in between:

> If I think of clients who talked about their dreams, clients are more inclined to talk about their dreams if I see them in the morning than if I see them in the evening. So, thinking about the first in the morning client, they might come in and don't know what to talk about today and come in a bit of a bad mood. I'd ask if they had any dream because if you have a bad mood, I know when they wake up in a bad mood is because they have had a particular kind of dream. (P1)

Emotions are explored by encouraging clients to use their mother language or other familiar languages when relating their dreams. Sometimes feelings are captured without necessarily understanding the words. This is indeed a very interesting aspect of existential-phenomenological dreamwork as the client is invited to relate to complex work in many different ways, which are not always comprehensible to the therapist:

> I had a client who spoke five languages. I could only speak English, and she found it difficult to express herself emotionally in English. So, we decided that she would speak in all the different languages, and I could get much closer to how she was emotional, even though I didn't understand the words. (P8)

Anxiety is also an unavoidable discussion in existential-phenomenological dreamwork. Fears about the future was a common existential theme where clients were viewed as confronting their anxieties in their dreams. Furthermore, being left behind, being lost and being rejected in dreams also created high levels of anxiety for clients. Being invisible in dreams was described as a horrible feeling, while blissful and erotic dreams still carry a degree of anxiety. One may question whether anxious dreams are a route to authentic experiences:

> Some clients' dreams are really sexual, you know; it brings in all sorts of different energies. So, they have to sort of express those parts themselves. Yes, murderers, multiple partners, whatever their material. We cut through a lot of bullshit, really. (P2)

> I feel very privileged when people bring dreams. It feels very tender and sweet and a very trusting thing to do. I feel that quite powerfully, actually, that when people bring dreams, they bring something really personal, really intimate, really vulnerable. (P7)

> Like any other relationship, you know, I think it's fragile because it's very easy to close it down, even without knowing it. It could be an opening, a little kind of pathway to something very different, maybe a bit deeper, yeah. (P4)

Indeed, the hyphen in between the words 'existential' and 'phenomenological' was also discussed. A legacy left by Heidegger (1962) in the history of phenomenology, being-always-in relation-to (hyphenated) emphasised the fact that human beings are always in relation with the world, others, and themselves. Anxiety is a fundamental given and death is unavoidable. This thrownness into a lifeworld that is free and limiting at the same time is undoubtedly also present in our dreams:

> I kind of see existential phenomenology with a hyphen, they're not separate really. I suppose the priority is always in with-world always in a relationship. So, everything that I experience is in relation to another, so that is always there, it's fundamental. We are living towards death and life is finite, so given that life is an anxious business is a given, but we are free within the limitations of how we are thrown into the world. (P3)

> If we're really talking relationally, then obviously if we take dreamwork as the microcosm, it's the way that we work with dreams is microcosmically expressing the way we work with therapy. So ultimately, just like a dream can open itself up, exploring the way one works with dreams opens up how one works as a therapist. (P10)

Despite the idea that dreams are treated just like any other mundane experience, they carry a complexity that resonates with the complications that may present in life already. Exploring all possibilities of what the dream might suggest, describing in detail all the parts may bring some relevance to what is happening in the waking world, where clients are

empowered to make some form of interpretation of what might be going on:

> The big things, dreams, for me, is, you know, take them seriously, they're personal, that's number one, incredibly personal to the person, you're the dreamer, to you, with your complex layers of experiences and fears and heaven knows what, all relational, so it's very, very complicated. (P4)

> Ultimately, the purpose of exploring the dream, if you like, is to see in what way it informs the client about their waking existence. How does it fit in with their life? How are they coping with life and living? (P3)

While dreams are treated like any other mundane experience, the therapist provides the space for the client to engage with the dream phenomenologically. All other complex aspects of the dream are also given due importance. Both the client and the therapist work together to deal with the client's emotions and anxiety and the therapist's dilemmas of how best to accompany the client in the meaning-making process of working through dreams. The relational aspect of dreamwork will be discussed more in-depth in the following theoretical category.

4.3 Theoretical Code 3 – Relational Dreamwork.

The process of building a therapeutic relationship with a client is viewed as an art by the participants. The existential-phenomenological therapist does not only give ample space and time for the client to be able to build trust and open up issues, but the therapist also invests in the client's meaning-making capabilities and interpretations. It was interesting to observe that this investment seems to be coming from both parties concerned as even the client often has this idea that dreams are going to be interpreted by the clever therapist. The clients set out to invest their time and money to get hold of these precious interpretations. Participants described the therapeutic space as an active movement that includes a sense of sameness, separateness, togetherness, and uniqueness occurring in each

therapeutic relationship. This oscillating dance of the different movements creates such intimacy between the two parties that it often enables the client to experience an evolving appreciation towards the value of discussing dreams in therapy. The therapist, on the other hand, feels honoured to have witnessed this transformation in this therapeutic dance.

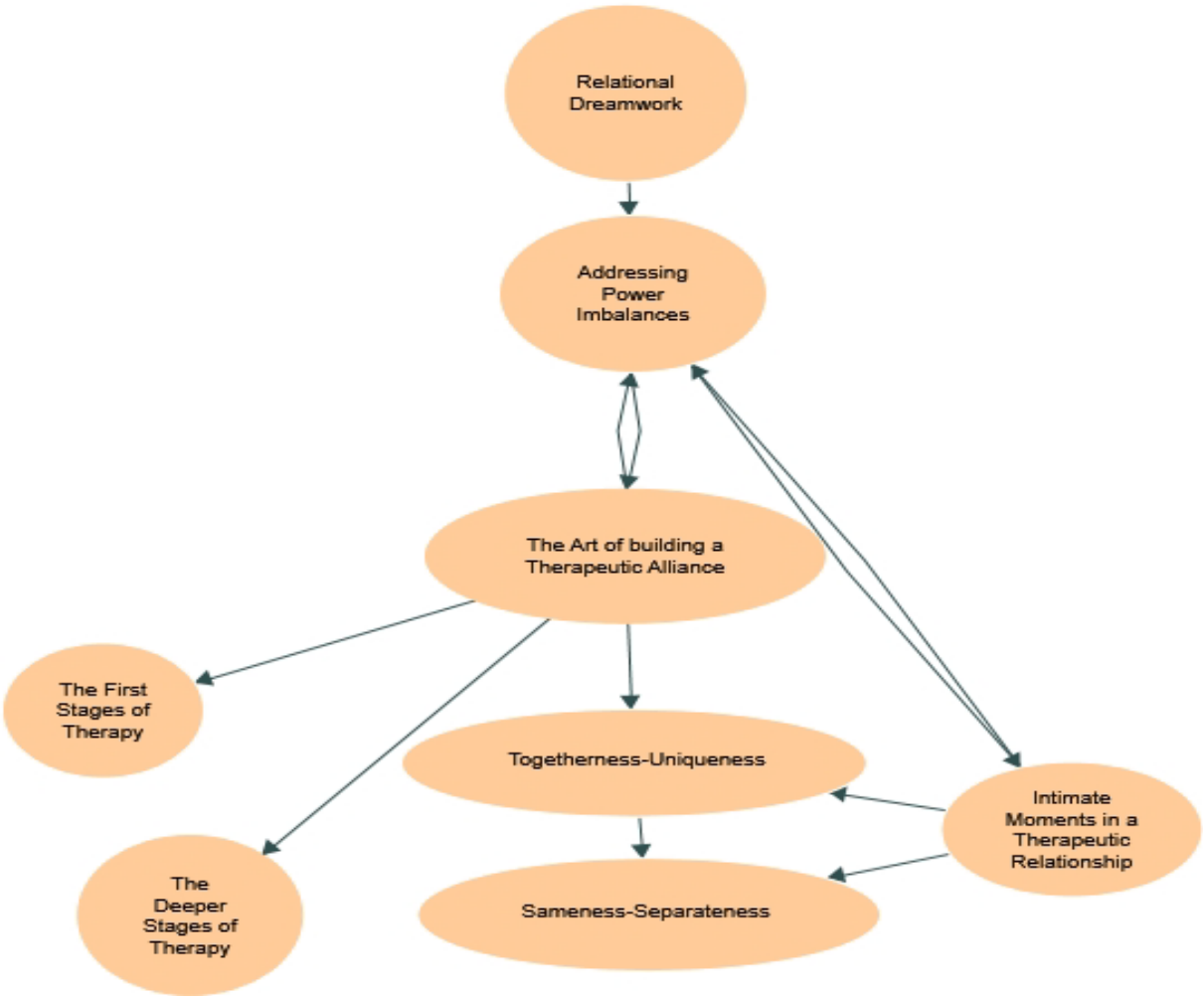


Figure 10 -Building theoretical code 3 in the concept map.

4.3.1 Addressing power imbalances.

Whilst conducting these interviews, my feelings about these participants were that despite being at the forefront of this discipline, participants were true both to themselves and to

their clients. The roots of their knowledge as therapists was very difficult to construe as it was often the case that they did not seem to rely on any knowledge. I was enthused by their 'rebellious' nature, as I saw it, and I was curious to know what may have brought this about. Clarifications were necessary throughout the process as this was not an activist group of experienced therapists who had disowned their roots. Rather, this group of participants were a very vigilant group of therapists who were careful not to fall into the trap of coming across as too clever (P6, P10), thus creating an impossible power imbalance. This attitude towards the therapeutic process was indeed a very humble one. Behind this humble way of being is a group of existential-phenomenological therapists who are knowledgable, engaged with writing theories and reflections themselves. It was indeed difficult for them to remain on the topic of dreams since they are sensitive to the political tension, not only of the local situation but also of the world. One of the presenting debates was that lack of sensitivity to power and political debate stagnates the existential-phenomenological therapist:

> I think experienced therapists tend not to read any longer. So you know they're stuck in a 20-year-ago time warp. I don't think they're probably interested in what goes on outside either because they're interested in what goes on when the outside stops short of the political. So, they're only interested in what goes on outside between about here and here (showing a very short distance with the hand). (P1)

> The theory is part of who we all are. It's a concept thing, so you can't say, this is a cliché thing. Existential therapists don't have a theory! Oh, what the hell! Of course, we all do!! We all think in a certain way. (P4)

Indeed, these participants are so sensitive to the power that they are conscious of my inexperience and my exploratory venture. They mediated this power imbalance by sharing instances when they were new to the field, inexperienced and still wanting to prove themselves as good enough therapists. One needs to appreciate that these therapists were still in the minority as existential-phenomenological therapists based in London. I also

appreciated that they treated the time they had with me as a matter of great importance. I could not help feeling impressed at how they evolved into sound, authentic therapists. It was not the knowledge, their training, or their writings that makes them who they are, and which attracted me to their way of being. Rather it is their natural way of being themselves with admirable levels of honesty:

> So as long as we can sit on our hands, let the client work it out, it's a much more powerful experience for them. Easier said than done of course, as we all have our own ego, we'd like to show off, aren't I clever? so we have to hold back all that. (P3)
>
> When I started to practise as a therapist, I found it was very easy to seduce people into thinking what a brilliant dream interpreter I was. There's nothing easier than to interpret people's dreams symbolically and make an impression on them. (P6)
>
> I like to think I've got better at not letting my anxiety and my desire for this person to kind of feel, ah, you know, at last!!, enlightenment!!, the great (P7) has shown me the way!!! I feel the threat of the other, but at least I'm aware it's a threat, and it doesn't engulf me, but it leaves me where I am. (P7)
> I experienced an expectation, of myself and the client, to answer the dream, or interpret the dream, or decode the dream. (P9)

It was indeed interesting to observe that even they have their expectations just as I have mine. They were keen on getting their unique voices across, indicating how hard they have worked all the way to be who they were. I, on the other hand, was keen to achieve some clarity. I was fascinated by this business as participants also spoke about the need to give their clients some clarity about the purpose of this therapeutic relationship. One way of doing it was giving ample space to clients to describe their lifeworld without judging them or interpreting their narrative. Appearing or coming across as clever makes the whole therapeutic process rather unsafe for the client. Besides, the expert façade is not a real one as the therapist is just as human, thrown into the world with the same unavoidable givens:

> I try not to have an expert part of I–know-what-is-going-on-here-demeanour but sometimes when clients have to talk about how I have appeared in dreams and what

> is going on, kind of you get a feeling sometimes of the amount of investment they have made in thinking you know or whatever. So, it is not about being an expert and hiding behind an expert façade. The themes of existential philosophy are there for all of us. So, it could be me; it could be you sitting there, you know? So, most of the work is about undoing that. A lot of the work is about undoing that. (P3)

> There's no right or wrong way to talk, you don't have to do it chronologically, just, you know, I'll stumble along, and we'll see how we get on. So that's about it, I'm afraid. (P4)

> It is about being with the client, entering their dream just as you would enter into their painting or just, whatever they're telling you, their narrative, and not get side-tracked into being clever, which I think is always the danger for therapists. We can get very clever. (P8)

> I think it's potentially dangerous, in terms of the relationship because once again, the therapist in bringing that element into it, is potentially saying to the client or the client hears it as I know more about your dream than you do. Not only is that arrogant, but I think, it's destructive to the whole enterprise. (P10)

And isn't it immensely beneficial to go to therapists who are strangers? This oddity in the beginning, between the therapist and the client, assists in the building of a strong therapeutic relationship. I have experienced this profound encounter many times, and so has this participant:

> I think it's fantastic. We all know that it's so much easier to go to someone we don't know, who's not part of our life, who just witnesses, enables us to think out loud, hear ourselves, yes, not to be clever, not just try not to do that. Do not interfere! because then it switches the spotlight on the therapist. (P4)

4.3.2 The art of building a therapeutic alliance.

What stood out in the foreground of these interviews is the importance of giving enough space and time to the client to be able to feel at ease with the therapist. The client would need to feel ready before the deeper work can take place:

> My style is primarily to make the person feel at ease. Absolutely make them feel at ease, check out that they're comfortable, offer them a cup of tea if there's time. Because if they feel comfortable, if they like me, then they can say what's on their

> mind. If there's a formality, you know, they might see me as a professional, which might give them the liberty to say what they feel. The sooner that we get going, the sooner that I can feel at liberty to challenge them, or whatever. (P5)

> I think part of the art of working with dreams or working in therapy, in general, is that sense of being careful as to when to bring that position into space. And whether the relationship is ready. (P11)

4.3.2i The First Stages of Therapy.

Participants are also aware of their educating role in helping the client to understand the value of working with abstract material such as dreams. This educator role, however, is not imposed on the client, but it is indeed a challenge to bracket this urgency in speeding things up. Moreover, there may also be the assumption that clients are financially stable and can assimilate and reproduce the language that is co-constructed in therapy. Participant (P1) states that it may indeed be a challenge to engage clients in dreamwork. Similarly, participant P2's main concern is that the client may be sceptical:

> A challenge would be to try and get the client to understand that dreams are things worth paying attention to. (P1)

> So the challenge would be how am I going to do that to a sceptical client? If they are not used to paying much attention to them or thinking them as just bits of nonsense that they can't remember? How am I going to tell them that they're wrong? Well, that is a challenge. So, I've got to try and back paddle on it and just find a way that respects the process that we're in, which is a questioning process. (P2)

The therapist's knowledge of the client's phenomenon becomes a resource in therapy. Therefore, since the early days of therapy do not contain this knowledge, this poses quite a challenge to the therapist in moving slowly, not make any interpretations and stay with the unknowing. Indeed, there was one participant who shared negative experiences of this moment in therapy, especially when clients have a sense of urgency to be in control, want quick results, or have one fixated and definitive destination, narrowing the many

opportunities of meaning-making concerning the dream. It seems that leaping in to rescue the situation is not a solution, but a dialogic exchange of ideas is initiated:

> Some clients more than others are fixated on the destination. I had a client who really wanted to go to a very specific destination, and we did a bit of dreamwork, but she wasn't getting what she wanted from it, and I felt a pressure on me. I also remember the dreamwork very strongly with another client where it might have gone differently, but because of this urgent need to control things, it just wasn't unfolding naturally. (P2)

> So that we can make a bit more inside understanding as to what is going on for them, it's as I say always go back to the relationship I have with that person because it is so dependent on how much trust there is. If someone tells the dream very early on in work, I may not know them very well, I would you know take much more relief in that aspect, but I can't guarantee that either because it so depends on the person. (P3)

> It's very tempting, I'm listening to you and it's very tempting for me to want to leap in and say, ooh, but I'm not going to do it because it's your, it comes from your body, it comes out of you, you've given birth to this dream, so you don't have to be in a hurry finding what it means. (P4)

> It very much depends on the kind of, you know, my feelings about the relationship and how much our relatedness, is kind of presence in the room at that time, as I think with any other phenomenon, I think the dialogical brigade would suggest, it's all about exchanging our ideas about meaning. (P7)

4.3.2ii The Deeper Stages of Therapy.

Once the therapeutic relationship is secure enough, dreams, in particular, are brought to therapy, becoming important expressions of trust. The therapist becomes a companion in the client's depth of description of the dream, just as they would accompany their client through an artistic expression, an awful experience or emotional pain:

> For me when clients start bringing dreams, they're expressing something about our relationship that they feel may be secure enough to bring in more material. Dreams become important expressions of the relationship between the client and the therapist. The client is willing to present a much deeper picture of himself or herself. So, I think dreams are statements of trust. (P11)

> They just need their hand-holding as they go deeper into work. You know, we're

> going into something unknown, into uncertainty. It's nice if there's somebody with us. I've sat down, and somebody's brought a terrible, really awful painful painting in and said, how can we change that? And I've painted with them. So that's the kind of fluidity that I will paint, I will dance. I can't sing. Thank goodness nobody's asked me to, but I shall probably have a go. (P8)

The more the client develops deeper meaning-making processes, the more the therapist becomes non-essential for the client. The process of therapy is described as a paradox in itself as while the client goes for therapy, there is a process of dispensation where the therapist is no longer necessary as the client makes new connections, getting to know more himself/herself:

> My belief is that you don't need me. I trust that you will discover that you do not need a therapist. You can be your own therapist, and sometimes that happens very quickly. And it's not about fixing things; you can work through issues. It's a struggle, life's a struggle, and you're already coping with it, but you don't know you are. You know, so it's, it's a kind of reversed kind of thing. (P4)

> I think this person's being, knows what it wants, and it's communicating through the dream. It's so succinct, it's so on the mark, everything is in that one dream, and you think, my god, you know, there it is, that's the work, that's what we've got to do. It doesn't happen, but when it does, it's very powerful. And you can't force it. You can't chase it, but when those sorts of things happen, that makes being a therapist such a wonderful job. (P9)

Eventually, this amazing thing happens within the therapeutic space. The more the therapist becomes non-essential, the more the client gains an understanding of what is going on in the waking hours, the more the client becomes appreciative of the therapeutic space. The client is also observed taking more risks in real-life situations, once the therapeutic relationship becomes more intimate where the clients can work deeper on the issues presented.

> My experience is that clients can start to give significance to something that they might not have done before. Or start to say, oh! I see how that fits in with my life. Or, Oh, gosh, that does sound like me. You know, having thought that the content was meaningless. As soon as they start getting the whole feel, the where, what, and

> how, if you like, then they start to value the process. (P3)
> I think it's important to stress that it's always worth giving it a go, to risk entering the dream with a client, in the sense that sometimes nothing may come of it. You know, they simply tell the dream, it doesn't really make much sense, or it's obvious, and that's it. It's over. But other times, it can generate such rich material. (P9)
>
> Because there is this kind of authenticity, all this kind of genuineness that, we also have in the relationship. That is taking more risks, you know. (P11)

4.3.3 Sameness-Separateness, Togetherness-Uniqueness.

This reciprocated movement between the therapist and the client changes form as the work progresses, providing space for collaborative work and individual work. The human element in the therapeutic process is not disregarded in that therapists aren't surreal beings. They may as well have experienced similar situations with different descriptive content:

> You know, you're a totally different person, a different background, a different life experience than I am, so there are so many things that we're probably very different, yes. It may be, you know, values maybe are different, all sorts of things, but on a basic human creature level, my god, we're in the same boat, we're emotional, we're struggling with trying to make sense of our lives, you know. We don't know when we're going to die. We're all of this. (P4)

The sameness and separateness of experiences in the conversation are continuously clarified, not necessarily explicitly. Whilst the process of co-construction of meaning brings a sense of togetherness in the therapeutic space, the meaning is unique to one therapeutic relationship:

> I'm receptive to it, and I think, because I'm receptive to it, then in subsequent sessions, if they've had a dream, particularly the one they bring regularly, I think it was because we embraced the first one and worked quite collaboratively together on it, that it's encouraged him to bring subsequent dreams. You can get too hung up on all of those, procedural techniques and not trust your own ability to see what emerges. And the key is to involve the client constantly. You are not doing something to the client's dream. The two of you are creating something at that moment. I mean, the dream has been had. This is, not so much about the dream. This is about the two of you discussing the dream, which is different, you know. (P9)

Sameness in narratives may not only resonate across clients' experiences but may also reflect similarities with the therapist's personal experiences. It seems that the emotional connection is so strong that clients seem to pick on what the therapist is not saying. I did gasp when P3 shared the experience below as it is often the case that this happens to me too. I also had clients who use South Africa as a country of preference for their imaginative stories when I had done my Jungian Sandplay process with a therapist who was originally from Zimbabwe. If anything, we are talking about solid connections, giving the therapeutic relationship a very intimate touch. I wish I had the opportunity to explore the following in more detail:

> Here was another dream the client brought once. I have a John Lewis account card, and I lost mine, and this client came and told their dream where they'd lost a store card, and she said 'it's so weird I don't even have a store card. I can remember how struck she was that I had lost mine so there is you know something is going on there and I found that very striking. (P3)

> We share so much, and I think that's brilliant, that's why I don't see myself that different from my client, we're different people, different ways of making sense of life, but at the same time... Otherwise you couldn't connect. And it doesn't matter whether the person is Eskimo or Chinese or, it doesn't make any difference, so on that emotional level we know that we, we connect, you know? (P4)

Allowing the separateness of experiences and owning what belongs to the client and the therapist facilitates growth in the relationship, empowering the client to come to his/her conclusions:

> I think the work is more about acknowledging and coming to terms with a difference, with our essential difference from each other, kind of, you know, that you and I will always be and always are separate and alone from each other. (P7)

What supports this intimacy is this respect for the client, primarily to whatever the client brings. In no instance does the therapist feel that in a better predicament than that of the

client? Rather, there is the understanding that we are all at the mercy of the same givens; we all experience a wheel of both negative and positive emotions. In other words, we are human beings full of strengths and a multitude of weaknesses:

> I'm not that different from clients when it comes to pushing self. They can be talking about anything. We're all very different and unique from each other. So, you've hit on a thing that makes me feel quite uncomfortable. There's a kind of I'm an existential therapist. I don't do this or that. And it doesn't wash, not really. It doesn't wash because then, intervening like that; you're losing your humanity. You don't realise you're feeling hopeless, helpless, weak, everything. You don't realise that you're also strong paradoxically. We're also strong. We're vulnerable. We're weak. We're strong. We're good. We're bad. We're insensitive. Every single time, no matter who it is, I think that's the underlying thing. It's fine. Your reaction to whatever is happening is normal. It's your reaction. It's to be respected. (P4)

These polarities are so intricately interwoven that they do merit more attention and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

4.3.4 The Intimate Moments in the Therapeutic Relationship.

Participant P2 compares the therapeutic relationship to intimate relationships. Just as a couple might have their unique vocabulary, which they can only understand, the same may happen in a therapeutic relationship, giving it such a uniqueness that participant P3 describes the relationship that the therapist has with the different clients as rather distinct. No therapeutic relationship is the same (P2):

> We're developing this language which is unique for us that you know perhaps husbands, wives, partners whatever won't understand. Yes, the specialness is unique to each relationship somehow. We've got so many layers to that specialness that might not be spoken. It is a special relationship. I still have a therapist myself. You know you can go and talk in a way that you can't with other people and I'm one of those people. (P2)

> It is difficult because if you've got a very set theory, a technique, you won't be as fluid as an existential-phenomenological therapist would be. You're different with every client. You know you're co-creating your relationship. There may be similar themes. I bring my thinking to the process. It must be different every time because

> the person is different, so how I am in relation to my child, or how I am in relation to my friend, or to a student. We're always in process. I've got so used to that; the idea of a fixed self just has no meaning. (P3)

Participant P9 continues to elaborate on what intimacy in a therapeutic relationship may look like. There may be such an interest in the other that the therapeutic relationship is not only built on trust but also on respect where both the therapist and the client feel mutually valued. This suggests that intimacy in a therapeutic relationship is greatly facilitated by therapists who have no inhibition in the way they relate to clients, give honest feedback, have great respect for the client's presenting phenomenon. Moreover, it seems that once intimacy is developed in the relationship, it makes the power imbalances more malleable to shift. Participant P8 delves into the emotional aspect of this therapeutic relationship. Therapists feel privileged to have heard their clients, some experiences of which are truly never forgotten:

> I put working with dreams in the kind of the second phase of therapy because it seems to me that the best way of working with dreams is when there's a real kind of intimacy established between the therapist and the client. They're both interested in each other, they trust each other, they have, value and respect for each other, and so there's truthfulness that can come out of it, honesty. And when there's that kind of intimacy, of course, there's always going to be power relations, but it's much more pliable, it's much more shifting than it is, more typically, where a lot of the power lies in the hands of the therapist. (P9)

> I'm hugely honoured that they share that intimacy, you know, that they trust you enough. I mean, what a gift, that somebody can do that. Whether it's a dream or whether it's a narrative or something that they have experienced in day-to-day life or whatever, it's always intimate, but the level of intimacy is different with every client because again there's a need to respect their worldview and their boundaries. I had one silent session with somebody who cried for 50 minutes, and I've never felt more connected to somebody in my whole life. I didn't speak, she didn't speak, but our sense of intimate connection was enormous, you know, and it was probably about 20 years ago, and I can still experience that sense of intimacy. So, it wasn't about the content of what was being brought in; it was about the interrelationship, the connection, the phenomena in the therapy room. (P8)

One can question how far honesty can be used as a base to the descriptions shared not only

within the therapeutic space but also throughout the interviews. Even though not fully developed, the following section indicates how uninhibited the participants felt during these interviews. The final section presents yet another complex facet of this process where it also suggests that despite having open conversations, many other issues still need further clarification. They will be very briefly presented in the last section.

Category 4.4
Theoretical Code 4 – The political dimension in existential-phenomenological dreamwork.

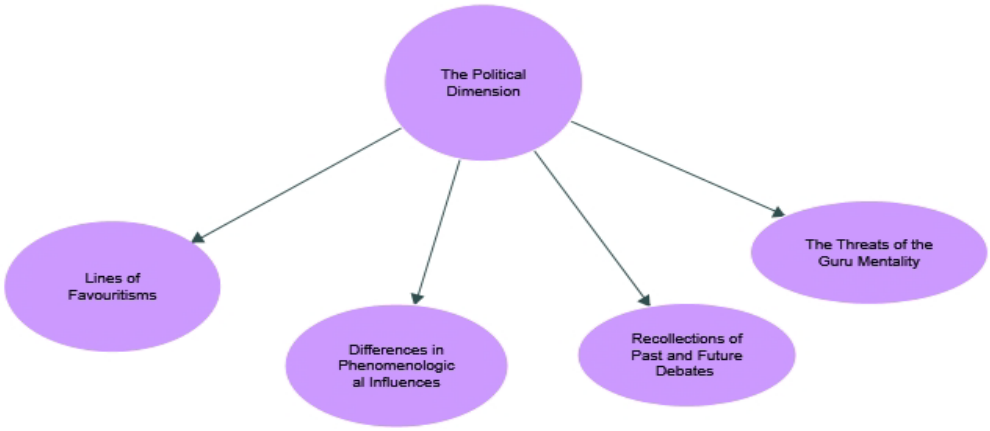


Figure 11 -Building theoretical code 4 in the concept map.

The second round of interviews was indeed quite animated as both participants, and I delved deeper into the subject. I had participants disappearing in their private office and I could hear them switching on the printer and reappearing with some proof of what was being said. Books were also pulled out from personal libraries in different languages, and quotations were translated. Lecture notes were pulled out from box files, where at times whole cupboards required dismantling to look for the evidence. I sat there on their sofa, greatly entertained by their enthusiasm. Indeed, when the interviews ended, I had a good list of primary sources. I managed to glean enough information to substantiate my arguments in the discussion chapter and solidify some theories. Initially, I was going to leave

this category out since most of the arguments stood in the periphery of dreamwork. Eventually, I realised that leaving this category out felt like a stage with no actors. The arguments presented in this category is what made these participants alive on stage. Indeed, I feel bold enough to say that there is also a political aspect in the essence of Being.

4.4.1 Lines of Favouritism towards Jung's theory.

Jung's theory took more prominence during the second round of interviews. Some participants were appreciative of many aspects of Jung's theory, and they shared the ways they modify it in the manner they work with dreams. P3 described circumambulation as the process where the client has an opportunity to go around the dream as often as was necessary. Seeing the image or the symbols as a container of meaning was described by P9 as possibly representing something to the client that may not be known. It may also be representing something that the client may not be able to put down in words:

> I mean I often use Jungian terms because it works for me, he talks about drawing up the context which I think is very similar to phenomenology in a sense. Let us get the whole picture of the experience of the dream. Then later, we might start making links with everyday life. (P3)

> What does the symbol mean for the client? You know, rather than saying it's X or Y, we say, could this be symbolic? Moreover, if it's symbolic, what's it symbolic of? Sometimes something may include a myth or a metaphor, so we'll look at that. But I wouldn't say I work purely existentially with dreams. (P9)

What participant P9 seems to be suggesting is that once you gain familiarity with other theories, it is difficult to say whether a therapist is purely working in existential-phenomenological terms or not. In my reflections, I wrote how fascinated I was by the fact that there was so much more to explore about the same dream when viewing it from different modalities. I am very attracted to both the existential-phenomenological and the Jungian school of thought and am enthused by unravelling depths of philosophical and

analytical knowledge. Both therapies challenge me in very many ways, and as a consequence of this, each therapeutic encounter with my clients is unique as I work differently every time. Participant P10 echoed my thoughts in the manner he views his diverse exposure to the different modalities:

> I've never lost my interest in the psychoanalytic mode, and I think that interest has been useful to me insofar as it's allowed me to kind of initiate an internal critique. All of these psychological ideas that inform any kind of therapy are ways into rather than final statements. It's our version of the Freudian unconscious or our version of the archetypes or our version of whatever. (P10)

The two participants below (P9, P3) seem to show some impartiality towards Jungian theory and aspects of its use in their practice. Their main objective is not to make any assumptions but be open to the content that the client is presenting without getting too bogged down with terminology. Therefore, be it Jungian, Freudian or existential, dreams are viewed as opportunistic messages to gain more insight into the client's world:

> The idea is to embrace the image but not interpret it or strip it off from its power because of the need to over-analyse it. Jungians do not over-analyse. They leave it to the unsaid. It's that mystery of the not knowing, where fragments are being revealed. There's less of an agency. I think what a lot of existential therapists have a problem with is the sort of agency of the unconscious. If you subscribe to the analytic view of dreamwork, you're assuming the unconscious has an agency. (P9)

> Jung talked about dreams being on a totally subjective level, everybody in the dream, even if they are different people, people you recognise even, are really you, but I do not buy into that either, but I try to see how it is to the dreamer. (P3)

There seems to be the idea that Jung was more phenomenological than Freud because aspects of the analytical work are more easily applied to existential-phenomenological therapy. This does not mean to say that these existential-phenomenological therapists over-analyse dreams. Rather the contrary, their understanding of Jungian analysis is that what is not known remains unsaid until the client presents some form of interpretation.

4.4.2 Differences of phenomenological influences in existential circles.

Despite the resistance to over-analyse clients' dreams, there is, of course, the ongoing debate of how diverse existential-phenomenological practitioners are amongst themselves. It has been reported (P10) that sometimes this variety in the work is a dividing factor amongst existentialists:

> It is almost a power fight as to which of the diversities is the true diversity and which is the false one. I think you've tapped into something which is there in this whole enterprise of existential therapy. We don't have a unifying figure. We've never had one. Some are more influenced by one philosopher as opposed to another, or one form of application as opposed to another and we're calling ourselves existential! (P10)

But how can diversities be true or false? The participants (P2, P3) do not seem to have colluded in this dichotomy. Rather, they have learned to integrate other theories, to think outside the box. Participants considered other forms of theories besides the psychodynamic schools of thought. There was the idea of having a foreground and a background in the therapeutic space:

> Gestalt psychotherapists are more prepared to be dramatic where they get into the world in different and novel sort of ways. (P2)

> Thinking about Perls' dreamwork where the client is asked to become the something which is in the dream. I mean Gestalt is not so far away from a lot of existential thinking so to integrate some of that into the work would not be so difficult. (P3)

It was also interesting to learn how one of the participants adapted Gendlin's theory:

> There is a very striking question that Gendlin asks what is it like being you now? It sounds obvious, but it is meant in a much more bodily way, not just what you are thinking but a much more all-encompassing question and that's certainly something I would ask and try and touch on. (P3)

Moustakas' idea of tacit knowledge is also applied in existential-phenomenological therapy, opening the discovery through a reflection of experience in writing as indicated (P9):

> Phenomenological research is talking about the essence and trying to find meaning. Tacit knowledge is something to be discovered, something we create within ourselves through experience, learning and writing. (P9)

There was also a brief mention of Robert Lang's idea around communicative therapy and the use of family systemic constellations, but since they were not specifically related to dreamwork, they were not opened. There was also some mention of Sartre's psychology of the imagination. Again, it was not possible to delve deeply into this theme either. It was often the case that interviews went beyond the hour, and I was conscious of the time, which was agreed with the participants before starting the interviews. As is pertinent with a constructivist approach, there is still much to be explored from very different angles, and the narratives shared in this category are far from being saturated.

Out of all the existential philosophers, only Heidegger's dream was mentioned in the interview. It seems that Heidegger was perturbed by one dream:

> Heidegger talks about various specific dreams. His own dream, his own stereotypical dream of which he had again and again. And he only stopped dreaming it when he had discovered the right way to translate a sentence of Parmenides which is usually translated as thinking and being are the same. And then he carries on talking about it to the very end of his life. And he's always coming up with a different translation of it. (P6)

Parmenides is Heidegger's (1992) original interpretation of Plato's (1997) writings on this same Greek philosopher. Heidegger (1992) analyzes the decline in the primordial understanding of both truth/untruth, closure/disclosure, concealment/unconcealment Heidegger (1992) writes that

"Night and day take their essence from what conceals and discloses itself and is self-lighting. That which is lighted, however, is not only what is visible and seeable, but before that as the

emerging – it is what surveys everything that comes into the light and stays in it and lies in it, i.e., everything ordinary, and it is what gazes into everything ordinary, indeed in such a way that it precisely appears in the ordinary itself and only in it and out of it" (p.88).

P6 believes that what Heidegger seems to suggest is that Being brings something different to the same world, by what Being is informed during sleep. However, what is concealed or what is disclosed are everyday situations providing Being with more clarity around the mundane. Heidegger (1992) describes it as self-lighting, where sleeping assists the waking hours with the possibility of more clarity on truth and untruth as indicated in Theoretical Code 3.

4.4.3 Recollections of past and future debates about dreamwork.

There was not much discussion about the neuroscientific evidence of dreams, and one wonders whether it was because participants are not well informed about what is going on in the scientific world of evidence-based research. The following narrative from P10 seems to suggest that neuroscience is an invasive method of exploration that threatens the phenomenological content of the dream:

> We have some idea of how important it is to dream, and how the loss of dreaming might have disturbing effects on people. Some challenges come, as I said earlier, from neuroscience or neurobiology or whatever. That, in a sense almost want to, de-emphasise the narrative content of the dream and just want to emphasise the neurological aspects, what happens to the brain when one is dreaming. So, it equally wants to deemphasise the actual material. (P10)

Conversely, there is also the suggestion that neurobiological researchers have more recently been making propositions regarding the concept of connectionism:

> Connectionism is the idea that all the parts in the brain, are like little notes, and they are all connected. For some notes they are activated during the daytime; for instance, the fact that we're speaking now about dreams is like the topic of dreams,

> is highly activated. These parts are more explicitly triggered in the brain. Quite a lot of neurobiological researchers have shown that during the night, those places that you've been using during the daytime are still highly activated. Our brain can't really handle nonsense or just random bits. So, our brain tries to make sense of all those high activated areas, so what it does is it takes this highly activated theme with another activated part and combines it in a weird categorical story. (P11)

It was only participant P11 who presented issues with neuroscience invading the content of the dream. Moreover, it was this same participant who seemed to have some issues with dreams having special qualities that go beyond the phenomenon. These special qualities were, according to participant P10 passed on by our ancestors as either messages from gods or messages from deep states, but this specialness has been side-lined giving prominence to the phenomenon:

> Again, it's not about erasing all that, it recognises the way that we approach dreams has a bias to them. We tend to see dreams as having some kind of special quality of some sort or other. For me, it's, kind of acknowledging all that and saying yes, but it's no more special than somebody telling me, they enjoyed a cup of coffee at ten o'clock in the morning. There's as much mystery in that statement as there is in, I dreamt I was being chased by dragons. (P10)

4.4.4 The threats of the Guru mentality.

There were several reflections, and questions about the existential-phenomenological practice, which still need further exploration. For instance, there seemed to be the idea that therapists are still very much influenced by the language used in psychiatry, whereby a client is viewed as needing sorting out. Moreover, some of the words which are commonly used in the medical field, such as the words 'unpacking', 'dissecting', and 'chopping' may be of a disservice if used when processing a client's dream. P5 and P9 seem to believe that therapists can easily fall into the trap of psychiatric discourse and kill the phenomenon of the dream with the choice of language used:

> Some people see other people as having a problem, which they've then got to sort out, you know, if necessary, by locking that person up and forcibly treating them. And even though psychotherapy is officially voluntary, there's still a lot of that way of thinking. The psychiatrist or the social worker would say that this person has got a problem, we don't know what to do with him, will you please do something about him, you know? Similarly, the therapist says I've got to, sort of, sort this person out and I've got to apply psychoanalysis or existential therapy or phenomenology. (P6)

> So, a dream could be the opening to something, but I don't really go there, because I feel if you go into dreams in any particular way you would have to relate great importance by analysing. (P5)

> And I think that's true of the dreams too, that, if you unpack them or dissect them too much, something can be lost especially if you believe that we can return to the dreams later and use them as part of ongoing work. If it's all, chopped up and dissected and interpreted, then, I think it loses its value. It's not living anymore, as part of the work. And to have the courage and faith to do it, try it out, and, and not be like, am I doing it the right way, or am I, am I existentially analysing this dream, or is this a good interpretation or is this psychoanalytic? (P9)

Towards the end of the second cycle of interviews, the debate around the political influences in existential-phenomenological therapy got even more interesting, and ever more heated arguments were presented, albeit underdeveloped due to the time constraints. Are therapists still bending towards interpretation? Can therapists avoid interpreting at all? Who is allied with who? Are these therapists agreeing that they will never agree on one way of looking and existential-phenomenological psychotherapy? These were some of the questions which I wrote in my reflections and indeed there were many more:

> Phenomenology is about interpreting, we interpret everything, so it's, a kind of reductive, simplistic reductiveness, which is just nonsense. Of course, it's interpretive. It might not be interpretive in the sense of the therapist says, of course, you know what's going on with this dream, don't you? (P1)

> It is a bit dated now, to always compare everything against Freud and Jung. Rogers always bunched clients, made it all nice before they left. Bion who goes way back, he used to say, leave the theory at the door, and go in there, and be. I don't know quite how he put it, but two frightened people together. We make assumptions, we make

interpretations, we inevitably are part of being, we can't not judge and make our own assumptions much as we try to be open to what comes. (P3)

It's not about being against the theory, it's almost like the therapist is the theory. All of these psychological ideas that inform any form of therapy are ways into, rather than final statements, yes? So, there's a kind of residual suspicion about them, you know, there's never a full-blown adoration of them. It's our version of the Freudian unconscious or our version of the archetypes or our version of whatever. (P10)

4.5 Theoretical Code 5 – Metaphor in Existential-Phenomenological Dreamwork.

Figure 12 -Building theoretical code 5 in the concept map.

This category around metaphor emerged gradually and I was relieved since it was a recommended theme for this dissertation by the Programme Approval Panel (PAP). The panel had recommended that the study should focus on aspects of dreamwork, clarifying how practitioners make connections between the dream metaphor and the experience of the clients' worldview. What is a dream metaphor? What is an existential metaphor? Are the two any different?

A dream metaphor is defined as an analogy or a description of imagery of the client's imagination shared with the therapist and one that takes centre stage during the therapeutic process. In his work, Perls (1992) presents the entire verbatims of clients' narratives. Clients are described as either presenting unique metaphors elicited from their dreams or are encouraged by the therapist to embody aspects of their dream and become for instance the red rose or Popeye. Van Deurzen (2010) abandons the idea of separating the parts but instead works holistically with multiple realities of the interpreted world as described by the client, concealed, or revealed in metaphorical language.

During my first years into my doctorate, I had the opportunity to understand better the use of metaphor in the writings of existential philosophers. When it comes to defining existential metaphor, I have not found a precise definition from my searches. For instance, both Heidegger (1962) and Kierkegaard's (1987) writings may be cited as indications of this term's potential definition. Therefore, my working definition for this study is an analogy or description of imagery as presented in philosophical writings. I wish to consider Heidegger's (1962) term 'lichtung' as an example of an existential metaphor. The word 'lichtung' has been translated in the English language as the clearing, a space that is found amidst the density of a forest. In Heidegger's (1962) writings, the beauty of metaphor, according to King (2015) "lends itself to Being's ambiguous nature. By using it, Heidegger (1962) side-steps the problem of reification; the image embodies a sense of mystery, shifting patterns and blurred edges" (p.114) bridging an abstract concept to a real phenomenon. The clearing in the forest is the process of achieving clarity, whereby that which was concealed or hidden is brought to the open, connecting the present to the absent.

As presented in Kierkegaard (1987), the ‘aesthetic and the ethical’ depict something deep which is happening on the inside of a human being, an eschatological movement to transcendence. According to Carlisle (2006), Kierkegaard uses "pseudonyms, characters, situations and metaphors to dramatize his ideas, showing how they are exemplified in human life; often the reader is left to choose between the different possibilities presented in the text" (p. 3).

The recommendations for exploring the use of existential metaphor and dream metaphors in dreamwork were included for consideration as one of the interview questions for this research. I was unsure how far I would address these specific recommendations since my choice of methodology was Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT). Bryant and Charmaz (2007, p. 611) hold that “the purpose of theoretical sampling is to develop the theoretical categories. Conducting it can take the researcher across substantive areas,” which in my case did not centre on the metaphor in dreams. Indeed, it was a difficult feat coming to terms with the CGT method as the researcher is required to follow all the possible leads which are presented by the participants (Bryant, 2017), so I needed to find a way of accommodating all these preconceptions; the ones shown in the proposal phase, and both the participants’ and my preconceptions.

The existential metaphor was indeed a bone of contention in the initial stages of this research process. Gradually many different sub-categories were extrapolated from the participant interviews developing a better understanding of what metaphor is like in existential-phenomenological dreamwork. The word ‘existential’ in its use with metaphor had more than one aspect to it, in that while metaphors are created by the client in the here and now, they are also in themselves general existential descriptions of the clients’

everydayness. The process of meaning-making of a dream in the client's waking hours is done in relation to the therapist and the therapeutic space which is provided. As indicated earlier, it was not possible to clarify this term 'existential metaphor' from background literature, and the development of this category depended on the co-constructed narratives of both the researcher and the participants.

4.5.1 Facilitating metaphor through the description.

Eventually, the exploration became richer in the description as participants shared the phenomenon of working with the immediate presentation of the dream. It seems that the initial stages of iterated description prepare the space for the deeper or expansive ways when working with dreams, giving the client the possibility of opening up a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations. A detailed description of the dream is presented and is well explored before metaphorical language appears in the clients' narratives.

The physical environment is explored in detail, which includes descriptions of persons, clothes worn, the physical place in the dream and whether there are different versions of the client in comparison or in contrast to how the client is in the waking hours:

> I really go into the detail, very kind of commonplace details. Like, various contextual elements, so you, that's in the dream. Is it the same version of you that exists now? Does he or she look different? What kind of clothes are they wearing? The place where you are, do you associate it with anything? And is it like the place that you remember or are there differences? You know, so really going to the material that the dream presents and saying let's really look at that, let's really open it up. (P10)

Another way of approaching the descriptive method, according to the participants below, is to go over the dream once and further explore the things that struck the therapist. All the

senses are explored within the physical environment as described in the dream. Persons in the dream are also explored where the client is encouraged to make associations with his/her memory of these described places and persons in the waking hours with how these places and persons look like in the dream:

> We go through it once. Then I'll, sort of, go back and just ask to take certain things that struck me, and perhaps just ask them to unpack it or describe a bit more. I begin by just getting them to stay with the description of the different components of the dream and, you know, perhaps a sense of colour, or smell, or anything. So that's usually the first iteration. And then, if there's a person or a place that is being described in the dream, I tend to ask them, what that evokes, you know, what that person means or what memories are associated with that place. (P9)

> And then I'll invite him to say: tell me a little bit more about that room you were in. What did you notice? What was important? What did you feel, smell, taste? So sometimes it will be nothing, but sometimes it will be quite vivid. And then, with the people in the dreams, again I will say, okay, Who, what is this person representing? What is the meaning of this person? (P8)

The client is encouraged to explore the dream physically through the body and make associations through bodily sensations. Encouraging the client to act out aspects of the dream helps the client to make connections with that movement, rather than remaining as an action in the distant sleeping hours.

> Looking at how the dream is being felt in an embodied way, in a physical way. Acting the dream with some clients lends itself to exploring it through action rather than through words. So, the value of that is that it makes the dream very present again. And quite often when clients do that, they bring much more material in that, they had seemingly forgotten. (P10)

Another explored possibility is the use of expressive arts in existential-phenomenological dreamwork where some mediums were mentioned. The material or imagery is either brought by the client or initiated by the therapist.

4.5.2 Metaphorical fantasies.

As I have explained earlier, there were debates on several issues happening within the transition between the first cycle and the second cycle of interviews. It is not yet clear what came first during the discussion, whether it was metaphor, narrative or theory. There seemed to be an agreement amongst the participants that all three aspects are necessary for the process of meaning-making of dreams. However, there was not a particular sequence of how narrating the dream, referring to a theory that might shed light on the dream and creating metaphors occurred. Heidegger's (1962) use of metaphorical language in his writings was a popular point of reference by some participants (P6, P9, P11):

> I think it was a talk that Heidegger gave in his hometown, Messkirch, and he quoted the poet, Hegel, saying that we are trees that have to put our roots deep into the soil so that we can grow up, with leaves and branches into the heavens. (P6)

> I'm very influenced by Heidegger's 'Aletheia, a sort of unveiling things. In the idea of the clearing, things emerge into the sunlight, but then they also disappear into the shadows, and it's a constant coming into light and shadow. I think dreams are very much like that because the client can't remember anything. And then maybe half an hour later or at the end of the session, they suddenly remember what the last part of the dream was for example, so it's this constant unveiling and receding, of things coming to light and then becoming covered again. (P9)

> I like the metaphor of the house in Heidegger. We need a house to live in, a place to hide, a place where we feel at home, a place where we make sense of the world. (P11)

These metaphorical fantasies created a movement from an initially dismissive or a playful exploration to very rich narratives depicting the co-construction of metaphor which is unique to each therapeutic relationship.

It seems that the ability and the predisposition of the client to develop these metaphors during the therapeutic process does not depend solely on the client. The therapist also needs to have developed enough skills and aptitude, which is fluid enough to be open and

creative. The process of developing a language that is unique to one therapeutic relationship can contain a repertoire of cumulative metaphors or just one metaphor which would be revisited many times during the stages of the therapeutic journey as indicated by participant P9:

> A lot of the dreamwork revolves around disposing of a dead body with this client. It will be a different setting; it will be a different time. There's always something about a body that he has to dispose of and we've, looked at it upside down, back to front. Because it's a metaphor it's not really resolved yet, but we've now got this language where, within the dream world, we can say, you know, this is similar to that dream or do you remember this dream, so it's almost like a sort of sub-culture. (P9)

4.5.3 The bazaar of metaphors in the therapeutic space.

It was very interesting to hear the unique metaphors which belonged to each therapeutic relationship. “Rafts”, “sharks”, “dead bodies”, “walls” are a few examples from an endless list of exciting metaphors that assisted the client and the therapist during the therapeutic process. Metaphors are presented to the therapist by their client, the meaning of which is co-constructed or negotiated, where the client gains a wider space in the interpretations of these dreams. For instance, the metaphor of the surfing board assisted this client in finding ways of coping with being in the world:

> My client's sense of being in the world was one of being overwhelmed, not being able to cope with being in the world. So, you know, the idea of a boat or a life raft or a surfboard was something, was a metaphor for a way of finding a new way of being in the world. (P9)

This same participant (P9) also spoke about a client’s use of walls in the dreams, and how the client built these walls to defend himself, and how these walls eventually trapped this client inside. Gradually these metaphorical walls became more porous in the client’s therapeutic sessions.

The metaphor of the fighter also facilitated the meaning-making process between the client and the therapist by enabling the process of understanding the client's difficulties with expressing emotions. This is an example where the therapist invites the client to think about the fighter as a potential metaphor to work through his anger. It was initiated by the therapist (P2), accepted by the client, and they continued developing meaning around this metaphor together:

> There was one young man who dreamt that he was in a house. He went upstairs, and there was this statue that was made of stone. It was the statue of a man who was a fighter, now turned into stone. I knew it was him because I knew he had a problem with expressing anger as a little boy and he'd had to have therapy. So, the meaning was between us, and we co-created it. (P2)

The language developed around the metaphor is revisited many times in subsequent therapeutic sessions, where the interpretation of the metaphor transforms across sessions and change the description the more the meaning-making process is co-constructed. The following example is about a towel in the dream of a man. P10 related how one of his clients initially dreamt that he was coming out of the shower with just a towel on when he had a sexual encounter with another man.

> So the towel in the dream belonged to a man, and in waking, life belonged to this woman that was the closest he'd ever experienced to being with a potential partner. Suddenly clients see something like the towel and connect it to something entirely unexpected. And so, the direction of the exploration really goes into much more specific detail around that. (P10)

Participant P10 also details how his client became aware of all the assumptions he had made around his sexuality and opened a spectrum of relational ways of being with others. Eventually, in a later session, the client recalled that the towel belonged to someone he knew well. I have already recounted aspects of the dream earlier on, but what strikes me

here is not only the therapist's interpretation, but I wondered why the therapist brings in sexuality in the conversation. Both the therapist and the client eventually realised that there was indeed a relationship in the client's life that could be further explored. The client was not aware of the potential of this relationship before he had his dream about the towel. Moreover, it seems that the client had the opportunity of exploring all the possibilities of what that towel could mean in his dream, in relation to what was going on in his waking life. The use of metaphor becomes the creative aspect of the dream, opening up different possibilities for interpretation as shown in the following section.

4.5.4 The expressive arts as metaphorical mediums.

Some of the participants presented analogies that were more related to expressive arts, inviting the clients to a more creative understanding of the dream:

> As with music or with painting or with writing, you have to learn how to spell, mix colours, learn notes, learn cords. (P5)

> When I can, I get them to close their eyes and ask them to be an observer or a camera person. So, I've had a few 'camera men' actually do it. Watch, observe the scene as it unfolds and notices how they're feeling when they're watching it, and you know and get them to interrogate the experience from that way really. (P2)

> It is a bit like a poem. The thing about a poem, any good poem never has one meaning. The power of the poem is to evoke a multiplicity of meanings, and you don't read a poem and just move on to the next one, but we could stay and keep on it and it and on it. (P1)

> Dreams are like pictures described as hooks to hang feelings on. (P1)

The objective of these analogies is to assist the client in getting in touch with the emotion of the dream. Dreams can have such a multiplicity of meanings and are loaded with a spectrum of emotions, which is impossible to capture in words. Exploring emotion becomes a crucial

part of the therapeutic process in the dream as they tap into a new awareness. These multiple meanings of the dream might take years of distillation before clients have all these meanings at their disposal in the process of meaning-making of one's lifeworld. Indeed it was interesting to also consider the description of participant P1 as it resonated with Heidegger's (1992) idea of concealment and unconcealment as discussed earlier:

> It's not like pass the parcel, once you take out all the wrappers you get to the good thing inside. There is no good thing inside or another way of putting it there is an infinite number of wrappers. It's about the process of discovery rather more than the discovery itself, it's more about this element of this dream means this but it also means something else, and next week it will mean a third thing and next year it will mean something else. (P1)

What may be unconcealed or otherwise revealed may provide some light in achieving some form of clarity enabling the individual to view situations from both sides of the coin, as is indicated in the next section.

4.5.5 Conflictual descriptions to the use of metaphor.

The challenging part of this category was when the same participants also considered a more negative tone to the use of metaphor. For instance, whilst participant P2 gave the analogy of the camera, the same participant felt the following:

Existential metaphor feels restrictive and squeezed. (P2)

And whilst participant P5 shared the analogy of learning how to mix colours or learn music notes to learn how to work with dreams, this same participant also uttered the following:

> You refer to awkwardness, almost as if you are there like a policewoman finding out that these therapists don't use dreams. (P5)

These other conversations left me rather confused about what to do with these conflictual descriptions. Indeed there were other participants whose feelings resonated with mine:

> It's almost like well we put it in this basket because we're not really sure where this is going. (P9)

I became aware of these polarised baskets: 'pro-metaphor' /'anti-metaphor', interpretation/non-interpretation, playfulness/stagnation, an endless black and white list of a polarised analysis of these narratives. In the process of understanding this polarised trap in the research process, I wondered whether I was leaving out other voices unintentionally, discrediting or disregarding the different shades that may exist in one's understanding whilst in the process of making meaning. I realised that I need to find a way to unblock these polarities and be more aware of this movement in the thought process. I gradually became less overweening and more diffident in this prospect, allowing myself to stay with this tension of opposites. I attempt to stay in the in-between by presenting the different perspectives, aware that no one narrative was the same or somewhat similar. I will continue to elaborate on these differences in the Discussion Chapter. A perfect example of this tension was the issue of metaphor in dreams, where it remained an ambiguous aspect throughout this research process. I kept wondering, is it not the case that all analogies and metaphors are in themselves existential? On the other hand, the metaphor was also thought of as arrogant and non-existential. Therefore can we tentatively suggest that metaphor brings power in the therapeutic room, which needs to be acknowledged. How is this power mediated when the client or the therapist initiates it? How does the therapeutic relationship allow these metaphors to take a life of their own, bringing new energy to this process, a new awareness around the client's lifeworld, an innovative way of looking at the client's predicament on the part of the therapist? These questions remain unanswered.

Participant P10 suggested that metaphor could be an arrogant and over-precipitating language in therapy. Participant P6 insinuated the dangers of giving analogies too much of an interpretation without grounding them enough in the client's phenomenon:

> Existential metaphor carries an arrogance with it that the therapist knows more about the dream than the clients themselves. (P10)
>
> It's part of the world if you like. Compulsively to go to the metaphor and ignore the immediate experience is destructive and abstracting. (P6)

It may be the use of metaphor that brings about a disguise or a defence to the raw experiences, creating a power imbalance between the therapist and the client and which completely contradicts Heidegger's (1992) release from the tension of closure/disclosure as discussed earlier:

> Metaphor disguises a dream because it is too anxiety-provoking. Therapists need to be careful not to tread on dreams and take over when they see something metaphoric. (P3)
>
> The metaphor was a kind of defence against experiencing the raw actuality of what they were dreaming about. (P6)

There were instances where the word metaphor was given psychoanalytic connotations, described as symbolic of something else, phallic or otherwise repressed sexual desires. However, despite this psychoanalytic influence in the history of dreamwork, participant P3 remained open to the possibility that the dreams may or may not have sexual significance:

> If you're talking about, something in a dream, it's not that the gun means a penis. But it may be, in the process of exploring the gun, and how the dreamer experienced it, and what it meant for them in the dream. It may become significant of something sexual, or it may not [laughs]. (P3)

Metaphors in dreams were also described as a disguise to something which creates great discomfort, a defence mechanism that needs to be challenged. It must be emphasised that some of the participants either trained as psychoanalysts or spent years going for their therapy to a psychoanalyst before existential-phenomenological therapy was even available in the United Kingdom as a new training discipline in the field of psychotherapy. Therefore, the years of experience that some of the participants have in both existential-phenomenological dreamwork and psychoanalysis has influenced their knowledge of Freud's idiosyncratic symbols, whereby a snake, a stick or a staff would only suggest something phallic, which leads to a repressed sexual desire, suggesting a pre-set interpretation of the objects appearing in the dream but with the possibility that such symbols change meaning in the psychoanalytical process. Participant P1 felt that integrating psychoanalytic vocabulary in their practice was at times unavoidable:

> There is a psychoanalytic word that refers to dreams as being over-determined which I think is awfully important. There is no end to what you can make of it. Every time you look at it you see something else. It is over-determined there is no one fixed meaning. There is a meaning for now. Come back in a week's time there is a different one, not a better one just a different one, one more appropriate to a week's time and in a year's time again another one. When I was, all the years on the couch talking about my dreams, I will sometimes come back to a dream I'd had a year before and think about it in a completely new way. (P1)

One participant (P3) sometimes thought that maybe being phenomenological and less interpretative of symbolic representations in dreams felt like she was missing out on something.

> I mean Freud talked about day residues that come into your dreams. I don't want to stray away from being phenomenological, but when I do read work or hear colleagues talking about a more sort of symbolic interpretative way of looking at dreams, sometimes I say, Oh! am I missing out by being too phenomenological if you like? (P3)

Indeed, this participant expressed how she enjoys the opportunity of someone interpreting her dreams. The dictionary of symbols was also mentioned as a reference by another participant, which she uses to get an idea of what the client's dream may be about. These conversations reminded me of my own experience with dictionaries of symbols. In the beginning, I was also keen to interpret my dreams with the support of such books, but they were long discarded when I did my process of dreams with both a Jungian analyst and an existential psychotherapist. After years of therapy, I realised that symbolic shorthand to interpretation misses out on the richness of description. My own experience, therefore, was very different from the experiences of these two participants as, despite their years of experience, they still found psychoanalytic terminology useful. All participant contributions with regards to the use of psychoanalytic language in existential-phenomenological dreamwork were unique and only expanded further the field of exploration.

When the conversation focused on emotions in dreamwork, one of the participants (P8) believed that psychoanalysis is intellectually engaging, but it did not speak to her heart or soul. The more she developed her existential-phenomenological ways of working, the more she moved away from her psychoanalytic training:

> In some orientations dreams would be the highest piece of wonderful therapeutic gift that a client could bring to a therapist. They're still very important material but no more important than anything else. And because I also sometimes work with drawings, people will bring in artwork and music, and we'll listen to those, they are for me very similar to the way I work with dreams, so it's initially nonverbal. I'm not experiencing their experience, but we are listening to the music together, we are looking at the art together. With a dream, you can never do that, and that's quite magical, it is internal always, even when it's described, you know, it's always their dream, whereas that piece of music, even if they've composed it, becomes, a co-experienced thing; the same with art. And it might be a shared experience, or it might be completely different. (P8)

The above narrative does sound paradoxical since this participant is suggesting that the description of the dream cannot be experienced in the same way as music composition or an artistic expression. The reasons are not only due to temporality issues, but the dream is an internal process. Therefore, the dream does not only occur during sleep and is only spoken about during a therapeutic session in the following days, but it also cannot be easily shared as it is situated inside a person, in a place that is not always easily accessible. Whilst artistic expression happens in the here and now, the dreams, according to this participant, happened during sleep and cannot be co-experienced in the same way. However, other participants believe that there is no magic in dreamwork but a greater appreciation of phenomenological ways of working with dreams:

> When I first began working with dreams I was still very much influenced by, you know, Freudian analysis. And so, I did see dreams very much as something that was obscuring or holding back vital information that had to be deciphered and so forth. I think to be honest with you; it was really my clients' reactions to those, that kind of investigation that made me start to question what am I doing? What is this? You know, mingled with my own dissatisfaction with that whole style of work and that whole way of working. (P10)

> I want to pull a rabbit out of the hat but if there's no rabbit there, how do I be with that? And it's about trying to sort of do the classic, well what's, does it mean -to-you- thing? And then it usually does mean something. (P2)

It seems that with or without Freud, the existential-phenomenological process is initially about building a detailed description of the phenomenon of the dream. Indeed, one of the participants stated that Freud was very phenomenological in the way he worked with dreams:

> Freud was extremely phenomenological, much more than most existential therapists. Freud would usually just be silent at the beginning and would just wait

and see what the person has to say. He talked about the different worlds, using 'umwelt' and 'mitwelt' before Binswanger or Heidegger did, as these are just ordinary German terms. (P6)

4.5.6 Concluding Comments.

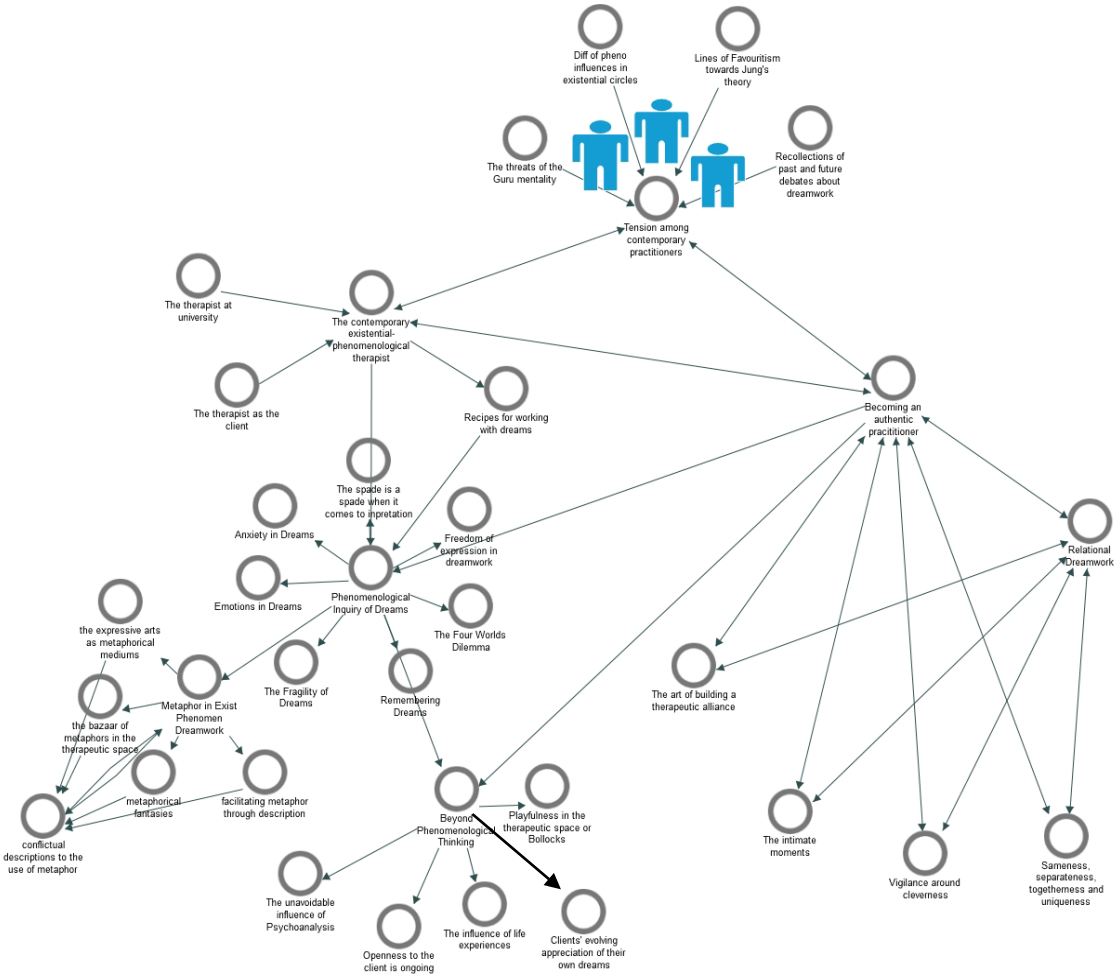


Figure 13 – Final Discussions to Existential-Phenomenological Dreamwork

This chapter highlights the complexity of the subject when bringing the five theoretical codes together. The individual subcategories in each theoretical category needed reorganising when placed in the bigger diagram. If we look at the bubble entitled 'phenomenological inquiry of dreams' it is evident that dreamwork, as practised by existential practitioners, has evolved well beyond phenomenological thinking as these practitioners have shown not only the ability to delve deeply into the subject of dreams

through the process of rigorous descriptions, but they are open to creative ways of facilitating a meaning-making process to the client. The therapeutic relationship is a unique one, which carries its language repertoire of metaphor and analogy, creating an active movement of togetherness and separateness between the therapist and the client. The process of working with one dream or several dreams takes place over many sessions where the interpretation of the dream is revisited, is changed until it evolves to newness of discoveries in the client's lifeworld. In the next chapter, I will present three discussion points where I will interweave these five theoretical categories with each discussion point together with the existing literature.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.0 Introduction.

The discussion in this chapter builds from the 5 TCs discussed in the previous chapter together with the literature as discussed in chapter 2. Four discussion points are presented in the chapter. There are multiple 'becoming(s)' in existential counselling psychologists and psychotherapists that will be discussed in 5.1 in view of dreamwork. Having reflected more around the political aspect of psychotherapy, I also found it relevant to interweave the literature to the findings in discussion point 5.2. The theoretical code of the use of metaphor in existential-phenomenological dreamwork remained somewhat foggy and this is discussed in 5.3. The apparent schism in existential-phenomenological dreamwork having psychoanalysis at its roots is another contradiction which also deserves further discussion in 5.4.

5.1 The multi-layered 'becoming(s)' of the practitioner.

> For the reality of human existence is never simplistic or predictable to that extent. Human beings are not binary but complex, variable and adaptable. Existential therapy must therefore remain so as well. It does not follow a dualistic path but keeps its options open. It recognises that choices are varied, the people change and that everything is intertwined and multi-layered. (Van Deurzen, 2019, p.6).

Everything is indeed multi-layered as Van Deurzen (2019) writes, even for these eleven seasoned practitioners. As I will demonstrate in this section there is not one becoming (TC1) for these participants but multiple 'becoming(s)'. Participants worked very hard on themselves in many aspects. They developed their talents, they expanded their knowledge through varied readings, others were inspired by watching films or taking photographs of natural environments.

The participants seem to celebrate their everydayness with a certain finitude, as though they are being spared yet another day. What they bring to therapy is their multi-layered ways of being, tailor-made for each individual client. The feeling of openness to the therapeutic relationship extends itself to dreamwork. So how does this knowledge contribute to the multi-layers of 'becoming(s)'?

5.1.1 The argument around acquisition of knowledge.

Some participants suggested that existential-phenomenological therapists do not read. One participant recounted an event when, during one of the conferences organised by the Society of Existential Analysis, there was a therapist who said he was proud of never reading a book. Another participant lamented that most of the experienced therapists stop reading when they become seniors in the field, creating a twenty- year gap between what they know and what is going on. The participants seemed to imply that a lack of reading could not only lead to a lack of information about what is going on in the existential-phenomenological field but would also lead to a lack of awareness of what is going on in other therapeutic modalities. Despite the value the participants gave to furthering their knowledge, most participants seem unaware of the development in Freud's work in the past decades. In fact, they still seem to refer to theoretical aspects which were more publicly known, as demonstrated in the Analysis Chapter. Not dedicating enough time to read was referred to as "bottomless stupidity" (P6). The irony around the above argument is that this lack of knowledge, if I had to follow this suggestive thread of thought, seemed to facilitate the differentiation that most of the participants tried making between psychoanalytic and existential-phenomenological dreamwork, where the sole purpose of psychoanalysis was viewed as getting to the root

of repressed sexual desires and treating it, while the purpose of existential-phenomenological dreamwork is to unravel the layers of meaning; moving away from a rather bleak, black and white thought process. The role of the therapist also suggests the capability of working with people harmoniously and creating a containment for conflict.

Spinelli (2019) argues that this tension within the roots of existential-phenomenological therapy is irresolvable because even the relatedness itself carries this duality. However, is not this lack of resolution the same as Kierkegaard's either/or analogy? Kierkegaard (1987) writes that:

> If the philosopher is only a philosopher, absorbed in philosophy and without knowing the blessed life of freedom, then he misses a very important point, he wins the whole world, and he loses himself— this can never happen to the person who lives for freedom, even though he lost ever so much. (p.176).

It is indeed the case that as human beings and as therapists, we continuously stand as isolated beings while at the same time are inseparable from others' influences and the other parts of ourselves. Spinelli (2019) states that:

> Being an existential therapist is a repeated attempt to embrace the question: what do I know? When I catch myself being the least existential with another is precisely when I am too immersed in some theoretical aspect of existential phenomenology. (p.70).

If we can at least demarcate one difference between the Freudians, the Jungian Analysts, and the Existential Psychotherapists, it is that in many ways, the participants have described that theory is never shared in the room with the client. There is no mention of repression, the shadow, or the mother complex. Instead, the participants claimed that the existential therapists' knowledge enriches the therapists enough to work with a diverse phenomenon. It was the process of becoming holistic human beings that informed the participants in theirtherapeutic stance with their clients. Hoeller (1990) states that

At the heart of the human being, there is care, as the unifier of human existence and although for the most part we are only concerned with the superficial aspects of what it means to be a human being, care remains at the centre of our existence. (p.11).

How true and untrue therapists are with themselves is also an influential aspect in the therapeutic process (TC3), as discussed in the previous chapter. I will return to this in the next section.

5.1.2 Rootlessness or uprooting? Variability in the phenomenological practice of dreams.

Another important aspect of this multi-layering to their 'becoming(s)', is that the participants often moved into the territory of how they view their identity as existential-phenomenological practitioners. Dreamwork was viewed by many of the participants as any other 'mundane' experience. I did not attribute their choice of describing this phenomenon as a way of devaluing dreamwork. Indeed, it seemed to invite a more creative stance of how they view therapy (TC2). Since practitioners are interested in the meaning ascribed to whatever the client brings, dreams are given the same treatment. In fact, this group of practitioners expressed that they dedicated time and energy to make meaning of their dreams.

My first impression was that the research participants were far removed in their practice from the worlds of Freud, Jung, Binswanger and Boss. There was a great deal of debate as to where their roots lie within their practice (TC4), the politics of which will be discussed in section 5.2. Some participants describe affiliations to previous training as rootless, for example psychoanalysis was reported by PP as "not speaking to therapists' soul" (P8). Moreover, another example mentioned by another participant describe the negative

experiences that clients have to their psychoanalytic interpretation. This impressed this participant and made them question their therapeutic practices (P10). All participants greatly valued a sense of congruence between their process and themselves.

The participants expressed that the congruence was stronger with therapies that were phenomenological with their approach. When they were in training Cohn's work on defining existential psychotherapy was being celebrated. According to Cohn (2002), existential psychotherapy is the "existential view of our relation to the world and other people" (p.17). The phenomenological aspect to this is the directness of the experience where each moment deserves to be witnessed by one or many. Cohn (2002) continues that for the existential-phenomenological therapist, "nothing is more important than the 'phenomena', the total context of what we meet in our involvement with the world, and this includes other people" (p.21). Participant P4 speaks about a personal experience she has had of having Cohn as her supervisor. Their supervision hour was the start of a deeper connection where she recalls having meals with Cohn and talking about Heidegger over a glass of wine. And it is indeed talking about this phenomenon that helped P4 develop existential thinking around existential givens such as taking responsibility.

Macann (2015) also tries to rescue what he perceives to be a dichotomy between phenomenological and existential theory. Other writers have tried rescuing dreamwork from other dichotomies; for instance, viewing the sleeping and the waking as part of the same lived experiences of a client (Descartes, 1641; Boss, 2001; Young, 2005). What strikes me is that despite the effort of practitioners like Cohn (2002) to define existential-

phenomenological practise, there are several dichotomies which need to be addressed. Bossian theory seems to have set the scene for a series of dichotomic thinking. Daseinsanalysis was promoted as something different to psychoanalysis and analytical psychology. Along the same lines Condrau (1993) went as far as comparing the interpretation of a dream psychoanalytically, analytically and daseinsanalytically (TC4). However, all interpretations from the three therapeutic modalities fell short, as one interpretation of the dream kept being replaced by one other interpretation of the same dream. Interestingly the participants expressed hesitation of how to put Boss. Writing in practice and some participants expressed finding solace in Cohn.

5.1.3 The stages of phenomenological descriptions leading to dreamwork.

Boss (1977) believed that dreaming was recognised as another part of human existence, which was at par with waking life. According to Boss (1977), there were also two critical questions to ask to apply phenomenology to the practicalities of dreamwork. Firstly Boss (1977) questions whether the person who is dreaming is open enough to the phenomena of life experiences. Secondly, Boss (1977) questions how far the dreamer is capable of recognising features of his/her existence as perceived in the dream:

> Our dream theory can be called a phenomenological approach, as opposed to the traditional causal and deterministic attitudes since it keeps strictly to the actual phenomena of dreaming. It aims to set forth an increasingly clear picture of these phenomena – phenomena that could be seen indistinctly from the first (Boss, 1977,p.27).

As mentioned at the end of the last section participants expressed feeling lost about to develop the practicalities in the therapy room of working existentially-phenomenologically with dreams. So, it is no wonder that Participant P4 earlier on, found

Cohn to be a revelation and kept a supervisory relationship as well as a friendship with him for life. Participant P6 acknowledges Boss' enthusiasm but was left with this conundrum of how to work with a dream that the clients bring in the waking hours. Other participants wondered whether dreamwork is better to be done in the morning but if client is an active dreamer, would the client need to start his day at the therapist every morning that the client has a dream? Spinelli (2019) supports the argument by stating that "the waking and dreaming existence of a given human being belong fundamentally together in unique selfhood that endures uninterruptedly lifelong and is strictly and ever mine, that is, strictly personal" (p.185). Spinelli (2015) suggests that the first stage of dreamwork is to encourage the client to describe the dream. He then encourages the client to offer additional information that is relevant to the spatial or temporal context, where subjects and objects are explored in detail. Spinelli (2015) then invites them to mimic any behaviours which were described in the dream until all the constituents of the dream are clarified further and identified. The dreamer can then revisit any of the constituents of the dreams further. One can already observe the active engagement that the therapist has with the client which is far removed from the distance that Boss still kept from his patients. All the participants' accounts in fact agreed that clients need to recount dreams in the manner they remember them best.

5.1.4 Relatedness in Existential Therapy.

Giving the space for the client to engage with experiences using detailed description opens the possibility of making a multiplicity of meanings of the same phenomenological experience (TC1), gaining an ontological perspective to the dreams as discussed earlier, empowering clients to eventually come out with their interpretations.

In relation to the stages of description were shared by the participants in their responses as indicated in the Analysis Chapter but rather than favouring one suggestion from another, participants seem to agree that a dream needs to be taken in stages (TC2), depending on how a client would prefer to work at it either using different media or the manner in which the dream is shared with the therapist.

An emphasis was made in delineating the phenomenon, which is not the dream itself. Rather, it is the person's telling of the dream that is phenomenological. The question is not just about what the dream might mean but why clients are telling their dreams in the first place. Moreover, dreams are not treated differently from any other phenomenological experience. According to some of the participants, the initial stage of iterated description prepares the ground for the deeper work, which may involve dreamwork. Cooper (2003) supports this argument by stating that while Daseinsanalysis starts with the entity that human beings are connected to the world around them which suggests an openness in the exploration of the clients' Being, tying Daseinsanalysis to Heidegger made it difficult for the therapy to develop and grow. Cooper (2003) writes, that Daseinsanalysts still hold a stringent judgment on the clients. Rather than projections, the exploration could view the clients' behaviours of how open or closed clients are in their everyday relationships, behaviours which are also manifested in the therapeutic relationship.

One participant described working with dreams as a poem (P1) because the therapist not only needs to know how to build a strong therapeutic alliance with the client, but the therapist needs to be patient so that the client adapts to the therapeutic space and the language of therapy, which is unique to that relationship. How can they do this, and is this appropriate? The challenge then lies in moving at the client's pace, making no

interpretations and staying with the not knowing. In the dance of sameness, separateness, togetherness and uniqueness, the therapist moves towards the finitude of the therapeutic relationship and becomes non-essential to the client. (TC3).

5.1.5 The Four Worlds Debate.

Van Deurzen (2010) developed the concept of the worldview by formulating the four dimensions into a framework that existential-phenomenological therapists could put into practice. The aim behind these four dimensions in a client's worldview was to systematically explore the client's world and examine the paradoxes and conflicts that the client can come up against in life. These discussions can range from basic bodily needs existing in the physical dimension to the power that other people may hold on to an individual within the social dimension, to an intense reflection about our existence in the personal dimension and the values we carry to build around us in the ideal world, on the spiritual dimension (Van Deurzen and Arnold-Baker, 2018).

Deurzen and Arnold Baker (2018) claim that the existential therapist does not take a position of power. Rather than handing down knowledge to the client, "the knowledge emerges from a joint exploration" (Van Deurzen and Arnold-Baker, 2018, p. 75). In her earlier work, Van Deurzen (2010) combines these dimensions to the positive and negative emotional poles in life. She describes the existing tension that lies within the force field of life and death. How far therapists practise these four worlds is debatable as has already been discussed. Participants described an existing division between the two schools of thought, thus introducing another two existing poles of pro-four worlds and the anti-four

worlds in the practice of existential-phenomenological dreamwork (TC5).

The participants who were in favour of using the four-world technique described the process of highlighting the details of the dream using the physical, social, personal and spiritual world. Some of the participants argued that the physical aspect of the dream continues in the waking by the action of writing the dream down on a notebook (P1). Other participants felt that the four worlds would only box in client's experiences, fragmenting the knowledge they gather about their clients into varying categorical degrees (TC4). However, despite the different strengths of tension felt by participants about these organisational principles, their responses suggest that the choice of either affiliation does not seem to hamper the importance of the relational aspect of existential therapy. As

5.2 The Political Dimension in Dreamwork.

> We tend to do everything we can to establish and maintain a sham security instead of facing our challenges. But when crisis strikes, or life exposes us to losses, we must face our basic state of vulnerability, and fragility brings back into our awareness the mortality and fallibility that is ours and that we have wished to deny for so long. (Van Deurzen, 2019, p.13).

People talk about the current matters going on around the world and how it affects them. Milton (2005) gives the example of the election of Donald Trump and the Syrian genocide. Swann (2019) adds an even larger list of existential challenges: "Climate Change, Overpopulation, Resource Depletion, Nuclear Terrorism, Biowarfare and the Singularity" (Swann, 2019, p.336). I can add on to the list by mentioning the more recent pandemic situation. Milton (2005) refers to these extraordinary situations as the big P in the politics of therapy. The small p on the other hand, according to Milton (2005) is all that stares the

person in the face, and which is profoundly personal.

This new understanding of the political supported my attempts in grasping the essence of my participants' narratives, particularly given the political implication of existential-phenomenological dreamwork. Moreover, I learnt to live with contradictions in the narratives of participants. I understood that the political implication with a big P when having participants with different alliances because of their practice, only suggested that this is just a taste of what is evolving in the field of existential-phenomenological therapy (TC4).

5.2.1 The political pressures on existential-phenomenological dreamwork.

Since a good number of participants worked closely with pioneers in the field of existential- phenomenological therapy, they also had to witness and work through the conflicts existing in the therapeutic area at that time. Participants reported their disapproval of daseinsanalytical training where students sat for a written exam whereas till today, interpreting a client's dream without the presence of the client is still a course requirement as in the case of Jungian analytical training. There were also qualms about what was symbolic around metaphors and how far the unconscious was an agency for change (TC5). Struggles were a frequent topic of discussion, where the diversity itself in the work of existentialists seems to be a divisive factor. Lamont and Arnold-Baker (2019) argue that the identity of an existential-phenomenological therapist is at risk of being devoured by the omnipotent one size that fits all therapies, putting the "plurality, subjectivity, the relational, philosophical, contextual and understanding of human living all at risk" (p.215).

Moreover, neuroscientists are presenting some credible evidence brought about by the combination of REM sleep and the dreaming state, which may put the existential-phenomenological practice of dreams under political pressure. Neuroscientific research has provided evidence that dreams serve the purposes of a soothing balm (Walker, 2017). According to Walker (2017), evidence has shown that during the dreaming state, the brain is devoid of anxiety-triggering molecules, suggesting that REM sleep and dreaming dissolves the emotion from experience. This may be a reason why the client relates to the dream differently in the waking hours. Secondly, Finkel (2018) suggests that we are in our most creative and insightful state when we are in a dream state. The one participant who was aware of these neurobiological and neuroscientific advancements are in a disagreement that these revelations could ever be a threat to working with dreams therapeutically. According to participant P10 for neuroscientists the important things is that people dream, and it is not about what people dream of. Whilst participant P10 continued to insist that neuroscience is deemphasising the content of the dream, Walker (2017) provides the research evidence and demonstrates how the dream state also becomes a lens, whereby "we can apprehend a full constellation of stored information and their diverse combinatorial possibilities, all in creative servitude" (p.226). Therefore, this process is not merely a house-cleaning exercise, as Kaku (2014) has also suggested, the brain tries to organise an activity coherently.

The participants seem to suggest that there is pressing need for existential-phenomenological therapy to claim its place as a treatment option. While practitioners remain true to their phenomenological origins (TC2), the pressure seems to point to a future with more binary splits (Milton 2018). He describes how persistent the either-or-

stance is in the psychotherapeutic field. He believes that the therapists are still failing to consider the interaction between the personal and the political in the therapeutic space, thus contributing to these splitting aspects of psychotherapy into more polarities. I have seen similar tensions in the participants narratives in the manner they hold their alliances both with how they sit with the knowledge they acquire and their conversations with other colleagues. Milton (2018) presents a strong argument to substantiate his view by mentioning several splits between normality and abnormality, ability and disability, race, gender and sexuality, where a therapist is required to understand this diversity and work ethically and effectively around it.

Black and white dichotomies were present in the interviews which suggests that dreams encompass the political dimension that already exists in the waking hours. Participants recognised the interplay between actual life and dream experiences. The equal status of the dream to the waking world is still a radical notion that existential-phenomenological therapists adopt. This small group of practitioners have managed to clarify how diverse the work is, no one existential-phenomenological therapist works the same and this diversity in the field of dreamwork merited explication. I wonder what aspects are still being ignored and one hopes to get further clarifications in future research. Milton (2018) argues that the political standpoint in therapy is so inescapable that the paradox of managing our binary splits, at least as therapists if not as human beings, only creates further splits in an either/or stance in the therapy room. To work as a therapist "requires us to understand the impact of diversity on our clients and ourselves" (Milton, 2018, p.17). The 'uncoveredness' which was mentioned in the previous chapter, does not only occur at a personal and social dimension, but is a given that we are constantly influenced

by our surroundings and what lies in these surroundings (TC3).

5.2.2 The inheritance of stepping out of one's phenomenon into the other.

During his visit to India, Boss (1966) writes, "my whole Indian journey can at best expand my horizon a little, but can it not benefit my patients in any way? Is my relationship to them really to remain as it was before?" Boss (1966, p.189) asks his guru. The advice was "as a conscientious doctor, quietly assimilate your Indian experiences. If these have impinged deeply enough, everything else will follow of itself. Your patients will sense that your actions are becoming meaningful in and for themselves" (p.190). Participants had no qualms about being themselves with their clients. If they did have an issue with how far they revealed themselves, as described in the previous chapter, they constantly put their presence in the therapy room under scrutiny.

I wonder whether the participants lived such a political tension in their careers inherited by their predecessors: Heidegger, Boss, Laing, Van Deurzen, Spinelli, to mention just a few, that challenged their understanding and lived ways of being psychotherapists. Have the Freudians and Jungians been in turn influenced by the existential-phenomenological movement? We are constantly influencing each other by our political position, which cannot be avoided in the therapeutic space, client to therapist and vice versa. One does need to appreciate that back in 2004 Du Plock had stated that the existential-phenomenological literature on psychotherapy was for many years dominated by a very small number of authors (TC1) "often first-generation immigrants who have brought an energy and valuable life experience to this orientation" (p.31). Participants must have, therefore, lived the diversity that existed in existential-phenomenological practice,

which, in turn, created political tension.

Our predecessors have shown us that knowledge with a power base, where the creator builds around him or her an aura of privilege is divisive in relationships not only amongst practitioners, but it divides "the relationship into knowing therapist/unknowing client, rather than unfolding the implicit assumptions that make the relationship what it is" (Messenger, 2004, p.151). By merely standing back in our questioning Messenger (2004) argues and keeping thoughts to ourselves, or at the worse parrot, our clients' narratives do not permeate growth where the client not only explores his/her values but there is no possibility of working with the abstract, such as the client's dreams. As far as this group of participants is concerned, the couch has been put aside Participants described themselves as themselves, which includes their role as therapists, rather than just viewing themselves as 'the therapist' to their clients. Moreover, there seems to be a unanimous agreement amongst the participants that a co-collaboration encourages the client to come out with multiple meanings of the same dream (TC3).

5.3 Persistent fogginess in the research process.

> Fog everywhere. Fog online and in print ...But never come there fog too thick, never come there mud and mire too deep, never come there bureaucratic waffle so gross as to withstand the clean invigorating wind of a sound English sentence (Evans, 2017, p.5).

Evans (2017) writes very clearly about this fogginess; It is indeed the case that in a world where psychoanalysis is still influencing the art of dreamwork and in a world where the

person-centred and humanistic therapies rose to the occasion to do the work differently, a great deal of clarification was needed in the existential-phenomenological field of dreams. Du Plock (2010), writes that whilst both person-centred and existential therapies appreciate the constant change in human experiences, he suggests that the shift occurring in the client may go in different directions in exploring their way of being in the world. Considering the contradictions prevalent across the interviews, I would add that even these participants indicated that they have been and still are in this constant movement of change, making choices as they go along, being uncertain on which aspect of the discussion to focus on (TC1). This uncertainty influenced my position as a researcher in a manner that I felt that I remained in a tension of contradictions. Seeking clarification was difficult, if not impossible, but it opened the subject of research, highlighting some very interesting aspects in the work which make it worth writing about. Finding a way of making myself clear in a specific aspect of the existential-phenomenological field was indeed a foggy business (Evans, 2017).

Like some of the participants, Cohen (2018) is in favour of the use of metaphor. There is more of a successful outcome to therapy when he adds the use of metaphor in the mix. Indeed, he refers to the use of therapeutic metaphor as “an achievement of intimacy” (p.19). However, Cohen (2018) always initiates metaphor himself when he wants the client to understand something. This requires the client to make a lot of effort to understand the therapist’s intent. Similarly, Delaney (1990) states that in the active process of conveying the intentional message using metaphor, there will be an ‘Aha’ moment when the client ‘gets it’. It is only within the intimate space between the therapist and the client, as discussed in the previous chapter that the two can exclusively

appreciate the richness of the message which was conveyed through the metaphor (TC3).

Conversely, some of the participants believe that stories are initiated by the client for most of the time and come with their own set of analogies. Therapists' knowledge of existing metaphors from philosophers' writings has no place in the therapy room as this knowledge can only restrict the client's view of the dream. Unlike Cohen (2018), this prescriptive view was abhorred by the participants as being too much of a rigid stance to dreamwork. During the interviews, it has been stated that when metaphors are presented by clients, there is an open space for exploration, making it possible to revisit the dream over many sessions, being playful around the description or interpretation itself, with the possibility that this may change over time (TC2).

5.3.1 The wear and tear of the coin analogy – deconstructing metaphors.

Derrida (1982) deconstructs metaphor suggesting a tension to the reader between its usefulness and uselessness. He presents the analogy of the coin where, despite its wear and tear, it still serves the purpose of discourse while it is still in circulation. In the light of my research, this Derridean (1982) idea helps me understand the circulatory movement of description where clients are given the space in therapy to deconstruct their initial descriptions of the metaphors they bring, creating a flux of meaning or multiple interpretations of the one metaphor over several sessions (TC1). Once all the meanings to the dream are exhausted, the metaphor is disposed of and replaced by something more present in the client's phenomenon.

One of the participants describes the process of losing a metaphor as an essential part of

therapy, suggesting that the client would have moved on in a different space, hence why the metaphor is no longer needed (TC5). As I understand it, the overall perspective is that for the existential psychotherapist, working with clients' dreams is initially dependent on the clients' phenomenon and the descriptions they bring to therapy are indeed an open-ended venture.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) describe how effective the use of metaphor can be when describing or defining a word. They represent the concept of metaphor as an argument, an activity that involves talking. A position is established either for or against an argument. The individual can win or lose, wipe out the opponent and be successful. This argument, in turn, suggests combat, a fight between the two sides. It cannot be assumed that the argument is a rational one. This also resonates with the engagement that occurs between the therapist and the client, maybe less so as a fight, not being a competitive endeavour in psychotherapy, and more as a unique encounter, where this dance of words takes place over sessions, producing a common language, enabling a deeper engagement when dreams are shared. This, however, does not exclude the battle taking place in the client, who may have more than one interpretation of the dream, involving more than two opponents, but providing the space for rational and irrational descriptions. A metaphor can indeed have all these kinds of meanings, and the metaphor for Lakoff and Johnson (2003) is defined as the symbolism of a war where all the different definitions fight for their space:

> Whether we are in a legal setting, aspiring to the idea of a rational argument, or whether we are just trying to get our way in our household by haggling, the way we conceive of, carry out, and describe our arguments is grounded in the ARGUMENT is WAR metaphor. (p.65).

To remind the reader of one of the very few examples of dreams shared by participants, I refer to the dream of the bath towel, which became a significant metaphor for exploration. In the first stage of the exploration, this participant explored with his client the dream itself and what it is like to open the door to someone only with a towel on. Then the exploration moved to what that towel may mean in his waking life. The client recalled a similar towel in his waking life belonging to a woman with whom he had a close relationship. The unifying point in the therapist's interventions seemed to be the exploration of all the legitimate uses of the towel (TC2). The relational aspect in the dream was not generalised to the client's recollection of the towel in his waking life. Instead, the client could explore his sexuality, a close relationship which he had with one woman, a consideration of his sexuality across a spectrum of orientations and his relationship with his therapist (TC3).

The horizontalisation process in meaning-making not only suggests a Derridian way of exhausting concepts but the cognitive aspect may also be considered depending on the clients' take on situations in their worldview. No assumptions are made and where meaning is constructed, it is not generalised to any other concept but only opens the metaphor to what lies beyond it, taking it back to multiple ways of 'becomings' even for the client. Vos (2018) also presents a more contemporary definition; a pragmatic-phenomenological approach to meaning, where he considers the perspective that different clients may have different needs and as a result, the way they approach therapy may be so diverse that "multiple perspectives could be occurring at the same time" (p.51), during the meaning- making process.

Participants revealed a collection of metaphors, which eventually became an opening

stance to more in-depth conversations, albeit refusing to share entire dreams. These metaphors were embodied in the therapeutic space using dance, painting-sharing with the therapist, and more pertinently, sharing dreams. The clients' metaphors shared by the participants seemed to reveal this process of moving in between the light and the darkness. Participants also described how metaphors start appearing in therapy in moments when clients feel halted, stuck, stagnated, are in the dark, are not in touch with their feelings. Metaphors are also very useful when there is something that is still to be explored or when clients are finding it difficult to take their therapeutic process forward. Boats, rafts, and surfboards were mentioned as metaphors, which were brought to the therapeutic space by the participants' clients. Detailed descriptions of metaphors are developed throughout the therapeutic encounters. There was indeed a unanimous preference to wait until clients bring their metaphors. One must appreciate that the participants' experiences of going to therapy seemed to be very much the same and the participants' therapists co-constructed meaning around their dreams.

To give one of the very few examples shared by one of the participants of how existential metaphor is used in existential-phenomenological therapy, one participant shared how his client had recurring dreams about drowning. Eventually, the client linked the feeling of drowning to feeling overwhelmed in the waking hours. The therapist then explored with the client that one could drown, or one could ride over the waves. The creation of both sides of the polarity brought about the metaphor of the surfboard which recurred in the sessions following where the client either described herself as surfing or falling off the board. The metaphor helped the client in finding a way of being in the world, where the meaning of the metaphor was continuously re-defined most often by the client.

They also revealed a sense of truth, not only about the clients' lifeworld but also about the participants' themselves, as discussed in the previous chapter in the process of Being uncovered. Talking about their clients' metaphors of 'becoming(s)' took the participants to a personal space, and they were more accommodating in sharing their own life experiences; when they became parents, were penniless, moved countries, dealt with divorce, lost a loved one and spoke openly about their eventual death (TC1).

5.3.2 Lightness and darkness and the in-between.

King (2015, 2018) defined such contrasts using the imagery of an in-betweenness of the lightness of the sky and the depths of the sea. As I stated earlier, one very popular point of reference for some of the participants was Heidegger's writings, particularly his thinking on the truth which he referred to as *Aletheia*. King (2015, p.110) states that reference to imagery is scarce in existential literature. He refers to Heidegger's lecture *The Origin of Work of Art* published in 1935, where *Aletheia* is defined as a dance in between the light and the shadow, the concealed and the unconcealed.

Similarly, participants reported that such contrasts laying between the sleeping and the waking hours were particularly due to temporality issues since the content of the dream occurred during the sleeping hours and the relating of the dream happened in the waking hours, where the client would have already developed multiple meanings of this same dream from an altered state. The same dream can be revisited over several sessions, the meaning of which is co-constructed between the therapist and the client, where new understandings of what the dream may be revealing emerge (TC2).

King (2015) writes how Heidegger describes the work of art as clearings, truths of being which are revealed. Trees were a significant symbol in Heidegger's writings as a clearing could never be treeless as otherwise, there would not be any darkness (King, 2018). Creating a contrast between the light and the dark would otherwise not be possible. As King (2015) and Spinelli (1996) rightly argue, the intention is not about applying Heidegger to dreamwork. Instead, it is about finding some relevance to the experiences of these practitioners, in the way they describe their work, using an existential metaphor (TC1). Groth (2015) also describes the therapeutic comportment of Boss given Heidegger's *lichtung* (the clearing); "each of us remains in the clearing, but then of now more, now less illumination. But then come those moments that darkens one's Dasein and bring about profound existential change" (p.274).

There was indeed a unanimous preference to wait until clients bring their metaphors. One must appreciate that the participants' experiences of going to therapy seemed to be very much the same and the participants' therapists co-constructed meaning around their dreams. This also included therapists from different modalities. The participants' experience of personal therapy suggests that their experience in training and their experience in therapy were very different. Personal therapy was a place of 'becoming(s)', as they explored themselves and the more they advanced in the ability to evolve through therapy, the more disenchanted they became with their academic training as existential psychotherapists. The more they divested themselves of labels and techniques, the more they had themselves to rely on in therapy. There is nothing etched in the stone, and everything in the life experience of a client keeps shifting and changing, always in motion, just as it happens with the life experience of the therapist (TC1).

Some other participants seem to have experienced the process of developing existential-phenomenological practice as an uproot from psychoanalytical influences, creating a further split between the analytical therapies and existential therapy.

5.4 The 'problematic roots' in psychoanalysis remain unresolved.

The issues with the use of metaphors in existential-phenomenological psychotherapy spilled over to the never-ending saga of how far existential therapy is rooted in Psychoanalysis, Daseinsanalysis and somewhat in Analytical Psychology. Freud was a point of discussion by practically all the participants, and they were somehow either agreeing or disagreeing with him. Freud has been criticised for over-relying on a series of metaphors that have only been restrictive or prescriptive (Leary, 1995). Mott (1950) holds that Freud had rescued dreamwork from the hands of fortune-tellers and gipsy encampments but only took it to the other extreme of chaining it to dogma. "The dogma asserts that the dream is an instrument of wish fulfilment," says Mott (1950, p.173).

According to Mott (1950), Freud never lifted dreamwork from simply being an instrument of scientific exploration of the unconscious. On the other hand, Mott (1950) does not seem to provide more fluid alternatives. He holds that dreams are fragments or pieces of this inner organic awareness, which have not been yet integrated into the human being in his/her entirety. Myths, therefore, assist the person having these dreams in integrating these organic pieces through the years, over the lifespan (Mott, 1950). Some of the participants further added that the psychoanalytic approach to dreamwork also limits its usefulness to the client's existential realities. Freud has been criticised for pathologising dreamwork using metaphors with a biased judgment, which may appear interpretative

and often narrowing it down to repressed sexual desires (Siegelman, 1990). Despite Freud's theory evolving more towards childhood traumas rather than repressed sexual desires (Montenegro, 2015), the participants still believed that psychoanalysis was still all about repressions and clients of these participants expected to have their dreams interpreted. I noticed how easy it was for these participants to give examples of how repressed desires appear in dreams. At this point in the interview both of us were giggling with their creative examples where church spires were described as phallic and handbags as vaginas. Their point was that too much of psychoanalysis had seeped in the culture that almost anyone can somehow slip in a Freudian connotation in a conversation. Spinelli (2019) argues that "it appears to be the case that regardless of the concerns and critiques of psychoanalysis raised by contemporary competing approaches, the vast majority have adopted and adapted a good deal of psychoanalytic structure" (p.127).

One of the reasons why some existential-phenomenological practitioners are still rooting for psychoanalysis may be due to the preconception that Freud's earlier work was phenomenological. From a computer search done by one of the participants, who has read extensively on Freud's *Gesammelte Werke* (collected works) published in German in 1952 there are twenty mentions of *Umwelt*, nine mentions of *Mitwelt*, which refer specifically to the two existential dimensions which reappeared later on in Van Deurzen's writings (2010). Furthermore, there are three mentions of *Traumwelt* (dreamworld), one of *Wunschwelt* (synonymous with dreamworld), twelve of *Unterwelt* (underworld), one of *Unterweltatmosphäre* (the atmosphere of the underworld), one of *Unterweltsrolle* (the role of the underworld), one of *Spielwelt* (game world), fifteen of *Phantasiewelt* (Fantasy world), twenty-one of *Innenwelt* (inside world). The findings around the roots to

existential-phenomenological dreamwork brought me back to the original conundrum around my participants' conflictual narratives when I read Groth's (2019) translation of Medard Boss' *Memoir* written in 1973. Boss (Groth, 2019) recalls that during his analysis, he experienced Freud as the most phenomenological clinician he had as yet encountered. Boss in Groth (2019) writes how different Freud was from his theory;

> At no time did he deal with me as a bundle of drives. In addition, as soon as he heard that I had been forced to starve because of him, he did not hesitate to reduce the fee. More than once, he even gave me seventy-five dollars out of his pocket. (p.174).

And what about Jung? Was he phenomenological? According to Brooke (2015), Jung was very inconsistent and poorly disciplined around his writings on phenomenology. Brooke (2015) suggests that existential therapists may view Jung at his philosophical worst. Brooke (2015), however, also admits that one would need to read Jung's work many times to make some form of understanding in phenomenological terms. The process of re-reading may, of course, be one of the reasons why my participants did not speak much about Jungian analysis. From my own experience, to understand Jung, one needs to do a great deal of reading from the primary sources. For instance, Vos (2018) believes that Jung's theory was also profoundly metaphorical. To reach the unconscious layers, clients require the analysis of a favourite fairy tale, dreams, fantasies, cultural and personal myths, childhood play, synchronicities (meaningful coincidences) and physical experiences" (p.168). In line with the above argument, it was undeniably clear to me that some other participants are still fascinated with the psychodynamic therapies in their specific approaches of interpretation and non-interpretation, the symbolic vs the language medium.

Spinelli (1993) very playfully reminds us that if we had to think of the first metaphor that was ever used to describe the conscious and the unconscious, it would be the iceberg where being only in touch with the tip of consciousness may have devastating consequences, if what lies beneath the water, the bigger part of the iceberg, the unconscious is never explored. I wonder whether Spinelli (2015) would have second thoughts about Descartes' writings. Descartes (2008) made no distinction between the sleeping and the waking hours, and it is possible to consider the argument that for Descartes the iceberg is the same one, the only difference being that most of it is concealed and unrevealing. The fact that in 2015 the iceberg analogy was still in circulation suggests that practitioners at that time were still grappling with the idea of consciousness and unconsciousness. Practitioners were still struggling to make some headway in avoiding psychoanalytic jargon to describe phenomenology in dreamwork.

As has already been discussed in previous chapters, the threads of psychoanalysis and analytical psychology are the unavoidable roots of Daseinsanalysis. Binswanger (1994) was the first phenomenological practitioner to come up with multiple meanings in the manner, he described how Ellen West navigated the swamp world, the ethereal world and the grave world in her psychotherapeutic encounters with her therapist. Binswanger's use of these metaphors was an attempt to give an anthropological interpretation of her predicament. Later on, Boss (1990) also vehemently disagreed with Freud's idea that the unconscious was a 'tendentious forgetting' (p.241), basing this so-called forgetfulness on his theory of repression. Boss (1990) argued that rather than viewing forgetfulness as controversially repressive, it is merely the case that a person is engrossed with something entirely different in thought from one moment to another. Therefore, from a more

phenomenological perspective, it would not be possible for human beings to hold previous representations. It would, however, be possible for past representations to resurface into consciousness:

> "Lightness, illumination, openness always only exist together with darkness, concealedness, closedness. The one conditions the other. The momentary mood determines the sort of concrete world-openness or closedness of an existence" (Boss,1990, p.246).

Groth (2020) believes that connection to psychoanalysis has been misconstrued because of bad editing and translation of both Boss' books. The reader remains uncertain about Heidegger's contribution to both the first and the second book entitled *I dreamt last night* in his attempts to define Boss' (1977) Daseinsanalysis. Despite this confusion in terminology Boss' approach exerted great influence on the first attempts to train existential-phenomenological therapists in one city in the UK.

It is important to note that during the time that most of the participants got their training, Boss' writings were the main point of reference; their supervisors were Daseinsanalysts and there was nothing else with which they could compare Boss' method. Therefore, it is not surprising to realise why the participants had such heated debates not only around the psychoanalytic and the analytic approaches but also with the daseinsanalytic approach. Participants revealed that it was not only the unavoidable influence of psychoanalysis in their training and their initial years of practice, which disappointed some of the participants. They were also disappointment with an overall stagnation in the writings around this topic. Binswanger and Boss were described as "dead white men" by participant P4. Others struggled to remember whether there was anything else written on

existential- phenomenological dreamwork, which was insightful, right after the 1950s. This iterative cycle of description only generated more questions, shed light on curious corners, making the exploration move nowhere near completeness and at the same time making it more enticing for furthering my scope in this research. At the same time, these participants respected each other's differences and sense of competitiveness. It was often the case where the participants clearly stated that they did not always agree with each other's mode of practice and did not hesitatein making it public TC4.

5.5 Conclusion.

This research has shown the complex and multi-faceted process that work with dreams involves. Despite the aim to treat dreams like any other waking activity it is easier said than done. These practitioners did not shy away from creating diversity in their work within the existential circle. They have perpetuated the perspective that no existential-phenomenological therapist works the same. Pinning down existential-phenomenological dreamwork to one approach reduces the richness of the phenomenon that clients bring. Conversely, because of the considerable diversity in the way existential-phenomenological therapists practise dreamwork, the field is undeniably a political one, primarily because these participants do not put on a therapist's hat and work within a prescriptive framework. Instead, they are open to the diversity of clients' phenomena where therapists continuously seek to work without judgment or prejudice, effortfully seeking a common language with each respective client within the therapeutic framework.

Despite the conundrum around the ever-present contradictions which have been presented in this chapter, I came up with my working definition for metaphor in

dreamwork. I define it as a spontaneous expression using objects and/or subjects which can occur both in the waking and the sleeping hours. These metaphors can be described in words, in a language that is most convenient to the person.

More questions emerged which may need further reflection. Is there still value in exploring clients' unique dreams in existential therapy? Alternatively, is this aspect of therapy becoming extinct? There are also of course, implications for training; what do students following courses in existential therapy need to know about dreamwork? Do students who are currently attending existential-phenomenological courses have enough opportunity to work on their dreams during their coursework and in their therapy? I reflect on the implications that the research findings have on the counselling psychology profession, and this will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Implications

6.0 Introduction.

Du Plock (2004) holds that

> good research is a living thing: it should leap off the page to revitalise some aspect of our way of being as therapists. In doing so, it mirrors the characteristics of good therapy, that there is a genuine connection between the meaning worlds of client and therapist and, in the meeting, some sharing of experience. (p.32).

This chapter brings this research project to a close. It starts with a brief appreciation of what I have gained from this research journey. I then outline what I have learnt from the Constructivist Grounded Theory Method. This is followed by some general conclusions and corresponding implications for the Counselling Psychology profession.

6.1 My experience doing this research.

I feel that this research has enriched me both professionally as well as personally. I am aware that the thesis does not comfortably sit within the Counselling Psychology profession. The subject of dreams is not central to discussions within Counselling Psychology, although there are counselling psychologists who are interested in the area. Yet it had appealed to me, and I did not see it as incongruent with my idea of what a counselling psychologist is and does. In my care of my clients, I am interested in whatever they bring to the therapeutic relationship, and I welcomed the chance to explore this aspect of the relationship through this thesis.

While on this journey, however, I was invited through the participants' contributions to see how their conversations about dreams inevitably led to their individual process. Having had many years of experience, the participants spent just as many years working on themselves.

Our conversations were a purely relational encounter not only in view of their clients and me but also in view of themselves.

It reminded me of Mercieca's (2011) observations where she states that for the caring professionals, "there seems to be no clear distinction between the practice of work and the practice of life and that in order to flourish, one should constantly attempt to reach the flourishing" (p.117). Her words put into perspective how this experience has been for me, as often my conversations with the participants felt like I was being offered many lessons for life since there seemed to be no distinction between process and content in the participants' responses.

I started working on this topic of dreams with great enthusiasm five years ago, which now seems like a long time ago. My approach to it was a distanced one, in that I was the subject, and I was studying dreams, the object of my attention. There was distance between the subject and object. Yet, through this journey, as I listened to the participants, I realised that there was no such distance in their stance. I call it a stance rather than an approach, as an approach implies distance. The participants demonstrated through their stories that they were sharing themselves with me, as that was what they offered to their clients. As the quote above suggests, there seemed to be no distinction between the participants' practice of work and the practice of life.

I thus slowly came to realise that the impact of this journey is as much my personal life as it is on my professional life. I have gained a sense of liberation in living a life to the full, pursuing what I want, allowing myself to be seduced, and yet carry life's responsibilities.

These observations are suggestive of what my research will contribute to the counselling psychology profession, a reminder that besides the skills set or supervision, continuous personal development, and the capability of living life as one sees it best, are essential to the counselling psychologist. While initially feeling concerned about participants not mentioning dreamwork in response to my questions about dreamwork I then appreciated what the participants chose to share. The use of CGT further helped me in explicating meaning and actions, staying with what participants wished to bring, collaborating in its saturation in the process of developing theory.

6.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory and Dreamwork.

Charmaz (2017) holds that CGT conceptualises processes that reveal implications for critical inquiry. In this critical inquiry, I not only included the interesting aspects of existential-phenomenological dreamwork, but I also presented the contradictions and the ambiguities. The subject of existential-phenomenological dreamwork is an abstract concept as practitioners may hold dreamwork differently not only because clients bring different phenomena to the session but also because practitioners evolve differently after their initial training. Therapists may want to further their training in other modalities, be it psychoanalysis or cognitive behaviour therapy. They are not spared from the thrownness of life experiences which may also get sticky at times, who they are as individuals and what they reveal about themselves in the therapeutic space.

My analysis of the findings has challenged my taken-for-granted view that I was going to find answers to all my questions, as it was not a straightforward exercise as I had initially imagined. It was not even about finding answers at all as I was not after solving a puzzle. As I

have stated earlier in this thesis, I was curious to know how other senior therapists in the field develop their ways of working with dreams. I challenged the perspective I had absorbed as a student, and I must admit that my view on existential-phenomenological dreamwork was still a narrow one in the beginning. My skills to undertake a research project were also rather underdeveloped and CGT helped to understand what it means to study a process, to include the multiple perspectives, establish a deeper bond not only with the topic being researched but also in the relationships with my participants. My findings have indeed outgrown the scope of this research. I learned how to give more attention to the language used and be sensitive to the different nuances as the way each participant worked with dreams was not the same, even though at times conversations resonated.

More importantly, when it was felt that participants did not address the topic in-depth or as expected, I had to learn to stay with fractions of answers and understand that having different final answers to where we had initially started the inquiry was part of the process where participants were taking the lead and I was collaborating. I needed to work very hard around my reflexivity of the findings to hold sound arguments in the Discussion Chapter and even harder to put in words what has remained somewhat nebulous. Rather than thinking about saturation, as suggested by CGT, I have come to believe that there are not enough answers for the immensity of this work that seems to take place at a very intimate time and place within the therapeutic relationship, which only suggests that the process of existential-phenomenological dreamwork is still evolving.

The journey through this research process helped me re-evaluate my existing assumptions and positionality as a researcher as I went through the different stages of the research. I am

aware of the limitation of having one small group of participants working in the periphery of a city in the UK. It is hoped that this research will enable researchers coming from different non-westernized cultures to draw on or contribute further to these initial findings. Dreamwork is such an abstract topic for research that what was communicated by the participants was not always easy to put in words. I feel that my participants, though they were few, were very generous with their sharing of knowledge and experience. In fact, at the risk of being presumptuous, I hope I have in some small way honoured their lifetime journey, which they have shared without reservation. They seem ageless, with some of the participants still being active therapists with many years of experience. What impressed me greatly is that participants tend to welcome whoever knocks on their door, treating it as a special encounter, and one which they are privileged to have. I speak for all eleven participants as I was warmly welcomed by all of them. Charmaz (2017) believes that the locations of the researchers and their participants matter. The wider understanding of 'location' for Charmaz (2017) includes 'familial, local, communal, traditional, and academic places, spaces, times and moments' (p.36). Having participants from one city in the UK where it offers such a liberating diversity gave me a fluid taste of a lifeworld full of possibility. CGT offered me the possibility of dealing with the findings in the here-and-now and so the temporal aspect presupposes that if I had to go back to these participants in ten years from now, their perspective on the subject would have changed, as indeed would mine.

6.3 General Conclusions.

Being qualified is just the start.

- There has been tension in this research process about what to read or not to read whilst becoming a practitioner. How can one choose to develop one's individuality? What else would one need to be doing besides reading the required readings, studying, attending personal therapy and supervision? It seems that the participants have lived in these constant tensions of working on themselves and having the theory behind them. The participants' artistic ways of doing therapy seemed to have saved them from being lost in a work culture where we must be performing all the time, achieving results, and building a successful profile. Was this the consequence of them having many years of experience? The practitioner passes through these stages of life, reconsidering his or her ways of becoming.

Everlasting therapeutic relationships are enhanced by sharing the most intimate of dreams.

- I realise that I have not re-invented the wheel, and the therapeutic relationship between a therapist and a client is one of the more renowned and intimate relationships across all therapeutic modalities. It is a deep connection between two individual human beings that runs across different therapeutic modalities. From my own experiences both as a human being and a therapist, the therapeutic relationships that I have had were indeed the most precious connections that I have had with strangers. Having the possibility of making meaning, a place where one could be truly oneself, sharing the most absurd of experiences, be it dreams, or fantasies is a priceless venture. Moreover, to add to my experience, there were

another eleven important persons, my participants, who shared their lives with me. Dreamwork has an ethical complexity to it, so much so that dreams of clients by these participants were seldom shared. They shared more of their lives than their clients' dreams highlighting therapeutic relationships.

Creating spaces and still-points in temporal freedom.

- The practitioner's knowledge, skills and experience are side-lined to make space for dilemmas, difficulties, opportunities, and openings that are presented to clients during their sleeping hours. Existential-phenomenological dreamwork is the process of engaging with phenomena that were encountered in the waking hours and continue to be witnessed in the sleeping hours. The clients have temporal freedom where they can weave in past, present, and future possibilities, expanding one's reflections and bringing them back to their outer or inner world. The act of dreaming creates the possibility to think psychologically and philosophically about the phenomena in the playful attributes of dreams and fantasies with the possibility of resorting to this playfulness in the therapeutic relationship during the waking hours.

6.4 Implications.

The versatility of the practitioner in the therapeutic relationship.

- Rather than being fully equipped with a skill set which is albeit necessary, the focus is more on how the counselling psychologists can learn to be different with different clients, responding to new phenomena and sharing fractions of themselves which are relevant to the clients' development of their individuality. This requires an element of useful disclosure within the boundaries of therapy. Shaw and Carroll

(2018) have stated that “counselling psychology is about relationships with our client/s, within organisations, with the social, cultural and political worlds we inhabit” (p.251).

Pacing the work with the client.

- It is indeed already a given that any therapeutic work is not rushed with clients unless it is determined by limited time or set to be a short-term therapeutic intervention. The conversations with participants showed how essential it is not to rush with clients and it sheds light on the importance of keeping the pace, creating spaces where time simply stops for clients making it possible for them to savour the moment. The implication of this point to the practitioner is that there is a bigger dimension in life than only the moments when we are awake. The fantasies and the dreams we engage within our sleeping hours provide a wider perspective to the clients’ lifeworld. This will imply a life of becoming(s) not only to the practitioners but also to the clients.

- **Training the student to become an inspirational practitioner.**

Counselling psychology students need to learn the art of living by becoming fluid, embracing uncertainty. One would not know if they would acquire this ability to live a fuller life by reading Heidegger or planting trees. The choice is not an either/or, and it is not a balance where one aims to read for reading’s sake or cooking for cooking’s sake. It is learning to savour life, enjoy the moment, making the construct of oneself a lifetime project. Becoming a fully accomplished practitioner requires many becoming(s): becoming a profound thinker, profoundly studied, and profoundly lived.

Implications to Counselling Psychology.

- This research invites counselling psychologists to revisit dreamwork in their practice. This could enhance the focus of how people function individually in relation to the other in the process of treating psychological symptoms, to integrating the possibility of becoming through the more abstract work of dreams. a

Limitations and Recommendations.

- This research project focuses on dreamwork. Yet, the participants preferred to answering my questioning by talking about their process. This could be seen as a limitation as I cannot provide direct examples of participants' dreamwork. Yet as I have mentioned above, I have come to appreciate the value of their responses. It is almost as though they were gently showing me the questions, they preferred to be asked to address my topic. The number of participants may be considered as small but there were time constraints and care were needed to have a manageable number of transcripts to analyse them within the stipulated time frame.

- Another limitation was the issue of language. English is my second language, and some of the participants also came from other countries and eventually immigrated to the UK. The nuances in being bilingual might be seen both as a limitation or a richness that is being contributed to the research process from other parts of the world.

- One recommendation for future research in the field of dreamwork is to focus explicitly on participants who are willing to share dreams or otherwise have

simulations of dreams by real people who could volunteer to tell their dreams to the participants. One could also consider researching with the younger generations of therapists. Another ambitious take would be to have both the therapist and the client working through a dream in action, but this would need a great deal of careful ethical negotiation with both the therapist and the client.

6.5 Final Words.

- I end by referring again to Mercieca's (2011) idea around the flourishing practitioner with years of practice: the counselling psychologist moves to an ethical maturity, with a constant challenge of finding one's way with each client, unconcerned with the need to fill the gaps between theory and practice but rather be present in being flexible to work with what the client brings, be this one dream, a repetitive dream, a series of dreams, or a metaphor which takes predominance in the therapy.

As I am writing my final words in this thesis, I end with this final note to myself primarily and to the reader as well. Challenge the boundaries of your private life. There is only one life to live. Sleep well so you welcome what is there waiting for you in the night. Become whom you need to become for yourself and the other. Dreams are great fountains of life, at least for the persons who have the privilege of having them. Be in earnest, take them seriously or not, maybe playfully, as dreams are the more important fractions of your undiscovered self. Working with your dreams is a lifetime project.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Advert

Call for Research Participants

I am interested in the ways existential therapists work with clients' dreams. Dreamwork has suffered from a lack of depth of engagement with existential phenomenological ways of working, relying instead on description and definitions of dreams.

` (cited from Elizabeth Price, 2016)

Through this research, it may be possible to gain a better understanding of how to work with clients' dreams both phenomenologically and existentially, which will be beneficial to both the psychological and therapeutic fields. Therefore, if you are an existential-phenomenological practitioner and possess a minimum of ten years of post-qualification experience with a keen interest in dreamwork, I invite you to take part in this interview.

For further information
Contact
Claire Francica
on
existentialdreamwork@gmail.com

Appendix B

Written Informed Consent

Discussions in Existential Phenomenological Dreamwork using a Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology.

being carried out by

Claire Francica

Doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy by Professional Studies
From NSPC and Middlesex University

Academic Year: 2016

Researcher's name: Claire Francica
Supervisor's name and email*:* *Dr. Niklas Serning*
Email: niklas@otrbristol.org.uk

- I have understood the details of the research, as explained to me by the researcher and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.
- I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.
- I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication, and I provide my consent that this may occur.

_____ _____

Participant name Sign Name

Date: _____

To the participant: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Health and Education Ethics committee of Middlesex University if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: _____

Appendix C

Participant Debriefing Letter

Discussions in Existential Phenomenological Dreamwork using a Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology.

:

being carried out by

Claire Francica
Doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy by Professional Studies
From NSPC and Middlesex University

I would like to thank you for participating in this research. Your time has been greatly appreciated and it is indeed a privilege for me the researcher, to have had this intellectual engagement and I look forward to meeting you again in around six months' time.

The nature of this research is to be able to make new theoretical contributions to the already existing field of existential-phenomenological practice in dreamwork. Due to the nature of the interview topic, you might be re-evaluating the experiences that you have shared with me, or you may be reconsidering your decision to take part in this research. Therefore, if you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me, the researcher, or my supervisor Dr Niklas Serning.

Contacts for further information:

Considering the depth of this research topic I would like to share with you further opportunities for exploration which you may or may not be familiar with and which could be relevant for your continuous professional development.

Researcher: Claire Francica - existentialdreamwork@gmail.com
Research Supervisor: Dr. Niklas Serning - niklas@otrbristol.org.uk

Appendix D

Participation Information Sheet

Discussions in Existential Phenomenological Dreamwork using a Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology.

being carried out by

Claire Francica

Doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy by Professional Studies

From NSPC and Middlesex University

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Psychology Department
Middlesex University
Hendon
London
NW4 4BT
UK

Dated: 22nd April 2016

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

This study is being carried out as part of my studies at NSPC Ltd and Middlesex University.

Existential Phenomenological practice has long suffered from a comparative lack of engagement with dreamwork, relying very much on the initial efforts of Daseinanalysts in making links to the phenomenon of dreams. This has been followed by a long-standing reliance on the description and definition of dreams as opposed to the openness of ways of working with them. Dreamwork has in turn, suffered from a lack of depth of engagement with existential phenomenological ways of working. My research aims to address this through a qualitative, constructive grounded theory study of existential phenomenological practitioners working with dreams. You are being asked to participate because you have replied to my advert to volunteer for this project.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Participation will consist of two interviews of approximately 60 to 90 minutes each at a time and place convenient to you. There will be approximately a six-month gap between the first interview and the second interview. I will digitally record the interview and transcribe it myself. I will use a qualitative research method to extract theme of what you and other interviewees speak about through which I will build a theory.

What will you do with the information that I provide?

I will be recording the interview on two digital recorders in case of equipment malfunction, which will be transferred to a password protected file on my computer and will be deleted from the recording device immediately. The transcription of your interview will also be kept in a password protected file. All identifying features of both you and any therapeutic examples involving your clients, whom you may mention, will be fully disguised. Names, backgrounds and geographical locations will be changed to protect your anonymity. My research findings involve analysing the contents of all the interviews and writing about salient categories from which theory may emerge.

All the data gathered will be kept at least until 6 months after I graduate. My research findings will be published and discussed in public forums and here again no personal details e.g., name, address or private practice location will be included.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

In the interview, I shall be asking you about your experience of working with clients' dreams, but not directly about clients themselves. It may be the case that talking about therapeutic interventions in relation to clients may cause some distress and may need to be revisited in supervision. If so, please let me know, and if you wish, I will stop the interview. Although this is very unlikely, should you tell me something that I am required by law to pass on to a third person, I will have to do so. Otherwise, whatever you tell me will be confidential.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is possible that through this interview we might gain a better understanding of how to work with clients dreams which will be beneficial to both the psychological and therapeutic fields. Being interviewed about your experience as an existential practitioner has no direct benefit, although some practitioners may find it an opportunity to reflect on their therapeutic ways of working and could thus find this beneficial.

Consent Information.

You will be given a copy of this information sheet for your personal records, and if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign the attached consent form before the study begins. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you decide to take part, you may withdraw at any time (including during and after the interview) without giving a reason.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is being funded by the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme.

Who has reviewed the study?

All proposals for research using human participants are reviewed by an Ethics Committee before they can proceed. The NSPC research ethics sub-committee has approved this study

Expenses

If it is more convenient for you to meet in London, I will reimburse a one-day London travel ticket.

Thank you for reading this information sheet. If you have any further questions, you can contact me on this email address: existentialdreamwork@gmail.com

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the study, you may contact my supervisor:

Dr. Niklas Serning
Email: niklas@otrbristol.org.uk
Or

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Appendix E

Networking

Facebook - Working on Dreams – A Gestalt Approach
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1036531893030110/

- C.J. Jung Club London - https://www.facebook.com/jungclublondon/

International Network for the Study of Waking Dream Therapy (INSWDT)
- http://www.wakingdreamtherapy.org/

Journal Readings

Dreaming is a peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journal devoted specifically to dreaming. The journal publishes scholarly articles related to dreams from any discipline and viewpoint. This includes biological aspects of dreaming and sleep/dream laboratory research; psychological articles of any kind related to dreaming; clinical work on dreams regardless of theoretical perspective (Freudian, Jungian, existential, eclectic); anthropological, sociological, and philosophical articles related to dreaming; and articles about dreaming from any of the arts and humanities. - http://www.asdreams.org/dreaming-journal/

Seminars and Events on Dreamwork

The independent group of Analytical Psychologists (igap)
-
http://www.igap.co.uk/igapjungiansemin.html

British and Irish Sandplay Society (BISS) - http://www.sandplay.org.uk/

Appendix F

Paper with initial findings
Presented
to all participants before the second cycle of interviews.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present the findings extrapolated from the first cycle of interviews of my research which is a part-fulfilment of a doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Existential Psychotherapy. Ten existential psychotherapists, with more than twenty years of experience, were interviewed. My research question set out to explore - what is it like for existential-phenomenological practitioners to work with existential metaphor in clients' dreams? In this research, I also wish to explore whether these very experienced practitioners have any contributions to make to the younger generation of existential practitioners, not only in encouraging the value of exploring their own dreams as therapists but also to expand their understanding of existential-phenomenological ways of working with dreams. Therefore, the aim of this inquiry is to establish whether dreamwork is still an important aspect or not of the work of existential-phenomenological practitioners.

Most of these participants were of the opinion that dreamwork is no longer a popular discussion among existential-phenomenological practitioners. This may possibly explain why references to literature or research on the topic in question were hard to find. Indeed during my program approval viva, it was referred to as a topic which lacks popularity, is rather ambiguous, is not so straightforward and is long overdue. An extensive search was done on the British Library E-Theses online service (EThOS), where it was found that between 1992 and 2017, there were 507 doctoral dissertations about dreams, in universities across the United Kingdom, but only one specifically covered existential-phenomenological aspects of dreamwork. Journal publications of the Society for Existential Analysis (SEA) are also rather scarce where most of the papers are a reaction to the work of Boss (1977) on daseinanalytic dreamwork.

In his doctoral research Smith (2013, p.145) recommended the exploration and explication of further 'unusual or other worldly experiences of Counselling Psychologists when adopting dreamwork'. His recommendation to future researchers in the field stems from his

conclusion that it is hard for practitioners to work with dreams because they are mostly viewed as an intervention when there is stuckness in therapy.

Boss (1977) believed in letting 'the elements of the dreaming world remain exactly as they are when they reveal themselves to the dreamer' (p.25). Young (1993, p.17) supported Boss' beliefs by emphasising that the therapist required constant practice in the co-construction of meaning in phenomenological dream analysis. Deurzen (2010), on the other hand, supported another aspect of Boss' beliefs emphasising working with clients' dreams focusing on how the client is in relation to the world, others, and life as a whole. Montenegro (2015) emphasises that the waking hours do not take any precedence over sleeping hours, mirroring an equal reality of the human condition.

Having read the work of my predecessors, I was and still am curious to know more about what it's like to be an existential practitioner working with clients' dreams. Law (2004) holds that if the researcher wants to be challenged on what she knows and sort out her messes of knowledge, then she needs to learn how to 'think, to practice,to relate, and to know in new ways' (p.2). I gradually learnt how to be more open to a collaborative process of inquiry.

1.1 Existential 'Metaphor'!

As stated earlier, the focus of this dissertation was meant to explore the connections that practitioners make of metaphorical themes elicited from existential philosophy in exploring clients' dreams. Unanimously, all the participants were confounded when asked about what they understood by existential metaphor and if this meant anything to them when working with clients' dreams. The participants found questions like: 'how would you define existential metaphor?' or 'What do you make of existential metaphor?', confusing, ambiguous and rather restrictive:

> I feel at a loss for words at the word metaphor; I feel I should be a proper existential psychotherapist. (P4)

> Existential metaphor feels restrictive and squeezed. (P2)

The rejection of engaging with such a specific term in existential terminology only resonated with my discomfort to a recommendation made by my board of examiners where the

proposal was approved with specific recommendations on exploring a systematic list of metaphors which are found in existential literature and their prevalence, if any, in therapeutic practice. I found my consolation in Leary (1995), who published a book on metaphors in the history of psychology. Leary (1995, p.4) defines metaphor as consisting 'in giving to one thing a name or description that belongs by convention to something else, on the grounds of some similarity between the two'. Leary (1995) argues that such a definition assumes that descriptions are assigned to things by social practice 'rather than discovered through some sort of raw experience as if they were somehow embedded for all time in their objects' (p.6).

> Existential metaphor carries an arrogance with it that the therapist knows more about the dream than the clients themselves. (P10)

Participants seem to affirm that metaphor goes against the grain of existential-phenomenological practice. Husserl (2012) introduces the idea of phenomenology as a science of essences in exploring the life of consciousness, where the content is intentional. Dreyfus (1991) defines Husserl's concept of intentionality as 'a consciousness with self-contained meanings' (p.2). Dreyfus (2017) describes this concept as going to the things themselves and letting things show themselves as they are in themselves. Participants showed no intention of engaging with metaphor as a point of discussion. I, in turn, felt that I was not faithful enough to grounded theory methodology if I insisted on following the board's suggestion from the outset. Charmaz (2014) views a researcher with an already prescribed agenda, as creating an unnecessary power imbalance, the elephant in the room. This dilemma, however, was used for the benefits of the research opening up a very rich discussion. Through a complex array of actions and interactions which included my efforts to bracket how easy it was for me to conjure these metaphors from my imagination, having invested so much time in exploring my dreams and reading about the different approaches, a more authentic interaction developed through the process of reflexivity and simply staying with the unknowing. As Burbules (2000, p.172) states, aporia is a transitional stage of being 'paralysed, stung by a stingray, being numb' to finding a new position in the process of inquiry despite the riddle of uncertainty.

Humbled by this uncertainty, I trusted the participants to take me through their respective paths of formation, hopeful to find a clearing of new-found knowledge and awareness. It is only with trepidation that I present the following emergent themes 'playing with playfulness', 'freedom from academizing' and 'aporia in existential-phenomenological dreamwork'.

2. Theme1: Playing with playfulness or should we just say 'Bollocks!'?

Given the paradigmatic history and influence of psychodynamic approaches on dreamwork, it becomes a complex task to unearth and clarify the potential nature of existential-phenomenological approaches of working with dreams:

> Everybody within contemporary psychotherapy has been in some way or other influenced by psychoanalytic ideas of dreams and dream analysis. Even if the influence is one of rejection of the assumptions, you've still been influenced by it. So clearly there's a whole history of dream analysis that I think any therapist is bound to be enthused by it to some extent. (P10)

> I was always against interpreting you know. Ah, this refers to early trauma with your mother who you desired to sleep with, but your desire to sleep with her was repressed for many years, despite the attentions of your jealous father, who wanted to take your mother away from you, oh bollocks! Bollocks to that! (LAUGHS). (P7)

> I need to bracket things, ...particularly the psychoanalytic. Because intellectually psychoanalytic work is very interesting (LAUGHS), but it does not speak to my heart and soul. (P8)

Carr (1999) explains how the descriptive character of phenomenological investigations take clients back to the experience itself. For instance, in his prologue, Nietzsche (1969, p.51) wrote that Zarathustra, a thinker wakes up from his long sleep only to realise that whilst gazing at the forest he was really gazing at his inner self. This inner gazing gave him a light from which he could 'suddenly see land and rejoiced: for he beheld a new truth'. It is in this sense that the heart and soul as described by this participant are in relation to the world in their most intimate of possibilities.

The liberating and creative capacities of laughter was a predominant phenomenon in most of the interviews. While I was going through the interviews, I could not avoid noticing the laughter that was in the room, an ambience so light and refreshing that it was very difficult

to avoid colluding with it. I wondered why the thoughts of collusion immediately came to mind. Who was the more anxious and uncertain? Was it me as a researcher having absolutely no idea where all this was heading? Were the participants showing some form of trepidation around the topic of dreamwork? Or was it about the challenge of co-participating on a topic which seldom takes the foreground in therapeutic discussions?

Gibson and Tantam (2017) hold that the phenomenon of humour has somehow been avoided when discussing what goes on in the therapy room as there is some anxiety around the presence of humour. It is believed that psychotherapists are still somehow influenced by a historical bias rooted in classical psychoanalysis, whereby the 'therapist was best kept entirely out of the patient's relationship with him/herself' (p.272). Indeed, Gibson and Tantam (2017) state that the collusion of the therapist with humour or laughter could lead to a psychic rupture inviting humiliation, ambiguity, uncertainty, camouflaging psychological rigidity and communicating a lack of empathy. Therefore, Gibson and Tantam (2017) express caution with humour particularly in the initial stages of therapy while, on the other hand, they encourage therapists to be open to such an emotional expression once the clients' narratives start to emerge.

> I kind of think as a proper existential therapist. LAUGHS. Probably like the sound of it, that's how I operate. (LAUGHS). Just take the pressure off. If it's spontaneous, if it feels real, then go with it. I have a lot of fun with clients, you know it's not all grim. WE BOTH LAUGH. (P4)

What was this laughing revealing to me? I could not capture it in my codes, and I attempted to capture it in my memo writing. I wondered; was it anxiety, camouflaged by a laugh of desperation from the part of me as a researcher? Was I ever going to capture the richness and the intensity there was in each interview through the process of coding? Or was it an irreverence towards the way of being as an existential psychotherapist in the room? At times I felt that participants were rather ambivalent around certain questions, particularly the ones that were described as restricting: pinning the existential way of working to a metaphorical concept, or purely to phenomenology, or to a classic existential theory.

> In my initial years, I found it easy to seduce people into thinking that the therapist was a brilliant dream interpreter. (P10)

> How I've been for the last 40 minutes is how I practice (LAUGHS). That's me. I think it's the experience. (P9)

At other times I wondered whether they were taking dreams less seriously than other more analytically-oriented psychotherapists. Deurzen (2012) holds that seasoned therapists tend to come to a more existential view towards the end of their career. 'Existential therapy is a spiritual quest that aims for inspirational rather than aspirational objectives'. (p.181) Maybe these participants do not need to strive anymore with integrating what they have disowned many years back. Maybe comparing their ways of working with clients with what they do in their own personal therapies is indibutable.

> It is a space of playful reflection of the therapist and the client feeling vulnerable with each other.(P7)

Rather, participants experienced a playfulness with dreams when choosing their own supervisors and psychotherapists. All participants showed an openness to taking their dreams to differently-oriented psychotherapists. Moreover, they also showed openness in believing that exposing themselves to spiritually-oriented practitioners, Buddhism, yoga, gardening, watching films and reading books or papers which created discomfort, ameliorated their ability to work with ambiguous material such as dreams. The therapeutic encounter, as a result, was described as laden with feelings of enjoyment in meeting with the client, carrying with it a sense of responsibility even when working with the playfulness of dreams.

> Read all you can, read good writers, read great books, watch great films. You know, Woody Allen is as inspiring as Heidegger and Merleau Ponty. I SMILED. (P7)

It was fascinating to see how this participant sat so comfortably with absurdity. What of Woody Allen? Philosophical questions and dilemmas seem to be the themes he addresses in his films. Can a person lead a normal life after committing murder? What would a human chameleon look like? If your favourite actor comes out of a film and into your real world, would he/she be able to give you a shot of happiness? It is indeed the case that laughter is a strong emotional, chemical reaction (Gibson and Tantam, 2017). And yet leaving the emotion out of the analytical process felt like missing out on the connection that was created between the researcher and the participants. Laughter also seemed to give

participants spontaneity in their work with their clients which was less interpretative and more relational in nature. Dreams were also described as life-giving attributes, gifts and poems in the therapeutic process.

> It's not like pass the parcel, once you take out all the wrappers you get to the good thing inside. There is no good thing inside or another way of putting it there is an infinite number of wrappers. It's about the process of discovery rather more than the discovery itself. (P1)

3. Theme 2: Freedom from academizing – a paradoxical mutism?

Participants felt there is no right or wrong way of working with dreams. And there is neither a right or wrong client going for existential therapy. Participants have observed that clients are also knowledgeable about the psychodynamic ways of working with dreams. They show respect towards the clients' use of Freudian slips of the tongue or conversations about the unconscious. It is often the case that clients make assumptions about psychotherapeutic interventions, where they think that to be 'good' clients they need to take their dreams to therapy. Participants, in turn, feel the pressure to fulfil clients' expectations in being clever therapists:

> I am wary of recommending anything to a client and be side-tracked into being clever because it is about being with the client's dream whatever narrative. (P8)

On the other hand, years of experience seem to have provided these practitioners with a humble approach in their existential-phenomenological work with dreams. They pride themselves on integrity that resists intellectual snobbery. Disowning the demarcation of lines as to whether existential psychotherapy is more phenomenological than psychoanalysis or not, facilitates the therapeutic relationship:

The challenge of working existentially is to avoid strategies or relying on techniques, allowing and showing courage with one's vulnerability. (P7)

Despite feelings of liberation from theory, knowledge and cumulative experiences, the uncertainty and insecurity around existential-phenomenological dreamwork remained present throughout the interviewing process. It is indeed the case that these practitioners have exposed themselves to a vast array of knowledge and not only immersed themselves

in existential philosophy but they are also well-versed in psychoanalytic and humanistic theories. Indeed there were participants who were anxious about being too vague in the interview or talking too much:

P2*: 'I feel like I am being quite vague for you but that's the best that I can say.'*

P5: *'I can hear my voice in my ear, you know, do you know when that happens?'*

There were even apologies given for having developed their own style of working which might not be easily recognisable as existential psychotherapy. Confessions were even made for still being attracted to psychodynamic therapies:

> There's a feeling of exposure in admitting to the existential community that, you know, Oh NO! YOU CAN'T CLOSE EYES and YOU CAN'T DO THIS because you are shutting down people's lived experience! (P2)

The co-interpretative process of the layers of description is a paradox in itself as the therapist can't avoid interacting with the clients' interpretations. There is an expectation on the part of the client for his/her therapist to assist him/her in the interpretation. This view further supports the earlier argument that both existential psychotherapists and their clients are ontologically predisposed to the historical paradigms of psychodynamic therapies which impinge on the ontic possibilities of working in the here and now. Paradoxically, even though the non-interpretative process is bracketed from the therapeutic space, these practitioners are keen to reflect on clients' experiences and like sharing their ability to connect these encounters to their vast array of knowledge in their writings:

> I've written about clients' dreams, they would have more detail I guess, and it might be easier to understand in some ways. (P10)

Moreover, I realised that even though the therapeutic encounters were laden with enriching experiences, paradoxically there was also a kind of mutism, conversations which were not brought into awareness. Levitt (2002) states that 'moments of silence may be indicators that clients may have become so involved in an introspective process that they shift their attention inwardly' (p.334). While participants did acknowledge that dreamwork was ambiguous and puzzling for clients to bring to therapy, making assumptions on the unsaid seemed to be unavoidable. Was this mutism an indication of underlying assumptions being made? For instance, some of the participants reported that clients tend to bring dreams

more in the morning than in the evening, more in the therapist's home than at a clinic setting.

> I start with the idea that it has to be significant because it was remembered just before the session and it's quite possible, because it happened just before the session and then talking about it, I might be in it in some way. (P1)

But, how do we know that:

> Clients, who come in a bad mood are troubled by their dreams? (P1)
>
> Dreams are expressing something about the therapeutic relationship? (P10)
>
> In Jungian therapy, then you have Jungian dreams, and if you are in Freudian therapy you have Freudian dreams, and if you are having existential therapy, then you have existential dreams? (P3)

How do we know? The temptation to leap in does not seem to die with experience; rather the existential psychotherapist becomes aware of his/her vulnerability in stepping in too quickly. The therapist then leaps ahead holding a muddle that may never be fully understood. The existential psychotherapist also feels responsible for informing clients that existential-phenomenological dreamwork is non-interpretative. Rather meaning is explored and co-constructed. However, it seems that the unsaid can become so difficult to mediate, and such a challenge to avoid making interpretations or assumptions, that the participants shared unhappiness in the moments when they needed to take authority. As if this intervention disrespected their authentic selves. As if it repudiated the collective understanding among existential practitioners that the existential-phenomenological ways of working with dreams greatly depends on the clients' response to the work.

Having faith in the therapeutic relationship is viewed as a joint venture that something will emerge from the dream. Each encounter is so unique that participants believe it would be a totally different experience with different therapists, as no existential psychotherapist is the same. It needs to be appreciated that these participants dared to self-disclose their vulnerabilities and were uninhibited in the manner they brought themselves in this process of inquiry. Indeed there was an openness that might steer discomfort among other differently-oriented therapists who are less disclosing in their modes of practice.

> I suppose what comes out of it for me is you, you kind of wake up naked, defenceless, so how do you now meet the other, because the other rushes in, like

> Laing, would say, you know, rushes in with, kind of, you feel the threat of, you know, he'd say engulfment or petrification, just kind of goes [inhales]. (P7)

> My job is to try to understand what this person is, trying to work out, and why, why he or she thinks that I might be able to help. (P6)

4. Theme 3: Is there an aporia in existential-phenomenological dreamwork?

An aporia is a crisis of a choice of action and identity, and not only of belief' (Burbules, 2000, p.173). It seems that all these participants have a great deal of experience of sitting with their own discomfort, not knowing whether clients have choices or not. They also sit with the discomfort of doubt and not knowing, questioning their modes of practice. These participants were not afraid of renouncing their expertise. Rather, they chose a humble and vulnerable therapeutic position, treating the concept of psychotherapy as simply an encounter between two people having a conversation. One of the participants strongly felt that existential practitioners need to watch out for falling into a mentality that only replicates the ethos of psychiatry where clients are always viewed as the ones having the problem.

> Clients sometimes sound like a challenging project to be sorted out by a psychiatrist or a social worker. The misconception of wanting to sort a person out by applying theory or phenomenology corrupts psychotherapy.(P6*)*

A sense of irreverence was also prevalent on this theme, where participants showed reservation at over-relying on Boss' (1977) ideas in gaining iterated descriptions of dreams:

> Was it Boss or Binswanger? Thinkers! Dead white men as I call them! I know this sounds kind of strange, but really, I'm influenced by myself, by my own lived experience! (P4)

> Well, Condrau, took over, ran the school of Daseinsanalysis, sort of took over from Boss and when Boss died, he did write a bit about dreams but very much Boss's tale, there is nothing different really. (P3)

Despite all the efforts at being phenomenological, it was also felt that the dream could never be re-experienced as the client has had it while sleeping. There can only be a shared discussion of the experience where the client is invited to highlight the details which remain significant even in the waking hours. Moreover, participants are of the belief that things

may not simply happen in the session with a client. The a-ha moment (Delaney, 1993) may as well be revealed in their sleep, even years after the dream was discussed in therapy.

Despite the complexities of living which can reveal themselves differently in the waking and the sleeping hours, existential practitioners believe in treating dreams like any other mundane conversation. So, how do these practitioners get to the essence of the dream? What is it like to work with the elephant in the room? In my memo writing, I referred to Ihde (2012) who refers to the fable of the blind men and the elephant. A group of blind men were given the task to decide what the elephant really was. Each blind man felt a different part of the elephant's body, but their descriptions were in complete disagreement; they mistrusted each other and little did they realise that the parts could not be taken for the whole. Ihde (2012,) holds despite their limited access to the phenomenon, they did not explore it in sufficient depth. Indeed, leaping to a premature understanding prevented the fullness of the discovery of the phenomenon-elephant. Ihde (2012) seems to suggest that sufficient depth in the phenomenon cannot be reached by one person, but there needs to be an interaction not only with the thing itself but also in relation to another.

Participants felt that rather than emphasising the use of iterative description, dreams could be treated as a predicament to a dilemma, a strife in an individual life project. It was interesting to notice how the four dimension of life, namely *Umwelt* (physical world), *Mitwelt* (social-world), *Eigenwelt* (personal-world) and *Uberwelt* (spiritual world), (Deurzen, 2012), became part of the conversation even unawaringly at times.

In the physical dimension, participants spoke about keeping a notebook at their bedside table and as much as possible avoiding using an alarm clock to wake up in the morning, as such gadgets might push the dream away. Moreover, dreams were often described as coming out of the body as if giving birth to a new idea, a new consciousness, a new way of seeing the world. Polarities of immersion and separateness were used to describe the tension existing in the embodied dream.

With regards to the personal dimension, dreams were described as incredibly personal with a sense of softness, tenderness, a vulnerability which is shared with the therapist. The feelings and sensations meet in the dream and are carried in the body to the therapeutic space:

> I describe phenomenological work as what is happening in the dream, in the client, in the therapist, in their bodies. (P10)

> The belief is that the relationship and the connection with the client are more. (P8)

Dreams, as described in the interviews, create a constancy in the intrapersonal dialect between the thrownness of things that can't be changed to the things that can change into life projects. Hence, a unique life project is a force that develops the individual's inner potential. Indeed dreamwork was described as the most intimate form of discussion within the therapeutic space :

> Dreams are incredibly personal to the dreamer with a complex array of experiences and fears. It is all relational and complicated. (P1)

Participants also felt that the dreamworld was a neutral space, which carried no cultural or historical boundaries. Rather, the connection to the other carries an immensity of emotion which can't always be described in words but can be manifested in the dream.

> It doesn't matter whether the person is Eskimo or Chinese, it doesn't make any difference, so on that emotional level we know that we, we connect, you know? (P4)

There were other participants who felt that dreams are an expression of an incessant desire of being intimate with other people in our lives. This elevates the personal dimension into a more inter-relational focus, where dreams present possibilities in relationships that are otherwise impossible in the waking life. And what does the existential psychotherapist do? Watches, witnesses, waits, is a companion in the deeper levels of potential relationships that need to be handheld into conscious awareness.

> The elevation of the personal is a challenge...as sexual undertones to dreams include the client's relationship to himself/herself, as a sexual person with the other and also feelings towards the therapist. (P10)

With regards to the spiritual dimension, some of the participants felt that developing their own spirituality assisted them in their work with clients. Despite the different belief systems of the therapist and the client, the spiritual dimension brings unquestionable reverence to the therapeutic space. Great respect is experienced in the encounter of two individuals:

> I think Buddhism is more in my attitude to the dream. I do meditation, so it's cultivating that ability to wait and, be patient and observant, and perhaps see what emerges, and not rush. (P9)
>
> In the sense of Uberwelt we talk about how we really are of value, we are informed about the way we live in dreams, even experience the divine. (P2)

Unlike the blind men in the fable of the phenomenon-elephant, participants made every effort to go to the essence of the dream. Horizantilsation remains the major phenomenological task in avoiding the fragmentation of parts.The tone of voice in the telling of the dream, the pace of the dream across sessions, the iterations of description, and the body which is carrying the dream to the therapy room are all given due importance in the conversation. This requires the therapist to be present and focused on the client telling the dream and taking great care not to embroider interpretation over the phenomenon of the other.

Each therapeutic space provided such intimacy and uniqueness in the encounter that it made me wonder what is it like for clients to step into these sacred spaces? Participants also spoke about making tea, digestive biscuits, dogs, scarves, the view from the window, dancing, walking, gardening, the list is endless. Such conversations created such a relaxed atmosphere, that sometimes I lost my focus, fully enjoying the digression of the richness in their conversations and the artefacts in their rooms. Whilst writing these last few sentences before my concluding paragraph, it suddenly dawns on me on the metaphors that I have extrapolated from coding the participants' narratives such as elephants in the therapeutic space, and/or boxing in traumwelt, metaphors which I look forward to discussing with these participants in the second round of interviews.

5. Conclusion – How far are existential practitioners thinking outside the box?

There was one participant who felt that the concept of the four worlds institutionalised existential psychotherapy annihilating the possibility of all other worlds. The participant described how in the case of Ellen West, Binswanger (1994) navigates the swamp world, the ethereal world and the grave world in his psychotherapeutic encounters with the client. Therefore this participant's argument asked whether therapists are over-relying on the four existential worlds? The one participant strongly felt that the four worlds can't continue to be presented to new practitioners as boxes that need to be ticked making sure to find the

client in all of the dimensions. How would the thought of adding yet another dimension to be ticked in unsettle my participant? Should we add another box? Traumwelt (dreamworld) as a fifth dimension? Or shall we be more fluid in working in whatever world the client brings to therapy as Binswanger (1994) suggests? This view created the discomfort that is needed to take the discussion further. It is indeed this discomfort that gives dreamwork the richness it deserves in existential psychotherapy. The above discussion aims to give the the reader a clear picture that this writing was enabled by the co-constructed work of both the participants and the researcher. It is hoped that this paper will provide enough discomfort to create more room for discussion.

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